Interview with Dayton S. Mak

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

DAYTON S. MAK

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: August 9, 1989

Q: Dayton, when and where were you born?

MAK: I was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, July 10, 1917.

Q: Let's talk about the family, let's go on the Mak side. What do you know about them?

MAK: The Mak original name was three-barrel Mak van Waay, which in Dutch would be Mak fon vei [pronounces in Dutch]. They were from Dordrecht, the Netherlands. The family had an antique showroom there, an auction house a bit like Sotheby's.

Q: ...in...

MAK: In Dordrecht. That was the Mak van Waay family. They then moved to Amsterdam. At the same time, anther part of the family, a son, I believe, wanted to establish a Mak van Waay firm in Dordrecht itself. According to Dutch law, they couldn't do that. There could only be one firm Mak van Waay, so they opened the Firma Mak in Dordrecht. The Firma Mak still exists, and the big building remains on the tour of the old city of Dordrecht. The Mak van Waay part, of which I'm a member, stayed in Amsterdam until about 15 years ago, when the last Mak van Waay died. He had no children. So, the Mak van Waay in

Holland effectively died out. There are no more. There are many Maks, but no Mak van Waays. My great-grandfather emigrated from Dordrecht to Orange City Iowa. When he came over, dropped the van Waay; so from then on, in the States, the name has been Mak.

Q: When did he come over?

MAK: In the mid-nineteenth century, I don't know the exact date. But it's interesting that as soon as his brother had children, their name was Mak van Waay, of course. When the sons came to the States, they dropped the Mak. So they are known as van Wey, and there are still some van Waays in the country. I don't know them, I've corresponded with one who said that he thought that after he and his brother died, there would be no more van Waays. But I have seen the name from time to time in the press; so I don't really know what the situation is.

Q: Do you know what caused the movement of your great-grandfather from Holland to the United States and then out to Iowa?

MAK: I think it was economics. At that time, the US Government was giving land grants to colonists who would come over and till the land. A whole colony of Dutch people moved into this area, which turned out to be Orange County. They named Orange County, of course, after William of Orange of Holland. They were just part of a large group of immigrants who came to this country at that time.

Q: What did your great-grandfather do?

MAK: I really don't know. I would guess that he was a farmer. All I know is that he lived in Orange City.

Q: How about your grandfather on that side?

MAK: My grandfather's name was Simon. Part of the family moved fairly early from Orange County to Inwood, Iowa in Lyon County. That's also in northeast Iowa, not too far from Orange City. He lived there after he was an adult. I don't know a lot about him, except that, as an adult, he became the postmaster, and then later on he went into the insurance business. He met his wife, my grandmother, there, in Inwood. Her family was the Lyon family, very simple people.

Q: From what I gather, at least on the Mak side, they weren't farmers, they were pretty much within the commercial context?

MAK: That's my understanding. I don't think any of them farmed, but what business he was in, I don't know. I do know, whoever, that my great-grandfather Lyon owned farms and was considered to be well-off.

Q: What do you know about your grandmother's background?

MAK: She was a Lyon, who were English immigrants, at least her father was. All I know is that he came originally from New York and later moved to Pennsylvania to a town a town called Bellefonte. I also know that part of his family lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I don't know when they arrived in this country. His mother I think, was of Swiss, Austrian or German descent, because her name sounded Germanic to me, but I can't remember just what the name was. It's a sort of blank and I've never tried to go into it very far.

Q: Your father, when and where was he born?

MAK: He was born in 1892 in Inwood, Iowa.

Q: What do you know about his upbringing?

MAK: He had two sisters. His family, I don't know whether it's because the Lyons were well off or whether he did well, but his family lived in a big house. In those days, people had big houses. As you know, they had large families, and they had big houses. And they had help, mainly Scandinavians. That didn't mean they were wealthy, that was the way people lived in those days. I know that his sisters, both were educated at Drake University in Iowa, and my father was educated at the University of Iowa. Obviously, they weren't poor, but by no means were they rich.

Q: You father, do you know what his educational specialty was?

MAK: Yes, yes, he studied law. He was in law school at the University of Iowa, but he didn't like it, so he went into business.

Q: How did he meet your mother?

MAK: My mother was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, because her father had gone out there to help cousins of his who had a business there. My mother was born there, but they only lived there five or six years.

Q: Were they Mormon or not?

MAK: They were Methodists. Her mother's father was a Scotsman who had come over from Glasgow and was a very sharp man. He established a business, a trading business, a commercial store, which mainly outfitted caravans which were going out west. He would provide all of their needs, I gather. He made buying trips annually to Europe, and brought back fine China and furniture to sell. He was rich. He was a rich man. His daughter was my grandmother. His wife was a Doty, whose ancestors were on the Mayflower. .My grandfather, Charles Houghton Dayton, was a member of the large Dayton family, whose ancestor, Ralph Dayton, came to America from England in 1638. Most of the family settled in New York state.

Q: How do you spell your great-grandmother's name?

MAK: We've always known it as D - O - T - Y. It's also D - O - T - E - N or D - O - T - E - Y. They were from England, and they came over on the Mayflower. That ancestor was not one of the religious, privileged people or rich people; he was a servant, an indentured servant. He was what they call a “stranger”. He was not a “saint”, he was a “stranger”. He was a tough little character and he got in a fight with another servant; they were both servants of Stephen Hopkins. That's the background of that family. H eventually married a daughter of Hopkins.

Q: Your mother and father, were they educated in South Dakota?

MAK: No, both were educated at the University of Iowa. They were classmates at Iowa. I think they met because my father was running for President of his freshman class, and my mother was running for office on a competing group. He was a “foreigner”, while my mother was a “townie”, and they had their own slate. They became acquainted by reason of this election. My father was a real leader there at the university. He was on the football team, although he was only about 5' 6”. He was athletic, unlike me. He was an ambitious man, very tough, and he was a real leader. He won the election, and my mother lost, but they started going out and they went through all college together. That's the story.

Q: They graduated approximately when?

MAK: I was born in '17, my sister was born in '15, so that would have probable been '14 or '15.

Q: After they graduated, what did your father do and where did your father and mother go?

MAK: My father got a job as an assistant cashier in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. That's where my sister and I were born. We lived there several years. We went from Sioux Falls to a tiny town, also in South Dakota; then we moved to another tiny town across the border

into Iowa. From then on we bounced around from one small town to another, until I was in third grade. He also was in the army during World War I, but he did not serve overseas.

Q: Do you recall bouncing around times?

MAK: I remember one scene from when I was a child in South Dakota. It's just this one scene, and it may be, maybe I made it up, I just don't remember. Until I was in first grade, I don't really remember very much.

Q: What scene do you recall?

MAK: I was not in school, and my sister was in first or second grade. We went to something like the last day of school, where they were having dancing and singing in the gymnasium. My mother and I were up in the balcony, looking through a screen, a basketball screen I think, watching my sister and others singing and dancing.

Q: Where did real memories kick in in your childhood?

MAK: I remember very much when I was in first grade, I remember my father wringing a chicken's neck and the chicken flocking around. I remember that. I remember in first or second grade, in reading class, each of us had to read aloud and the other students were asked to criticize. I remember my reading a piece something like: “The horse was in the barn”. Some little snip of a girl got up and said: “Sonny (I was know as Sonny Mak) said 'thee' instead of 'the'". I could have wrung her neck.

Q: (Laughter)

MAK: I also remember going to girls' basketball games in the gymnasium in the school where I was in first and second grade.

Q: Where was this?

MAK: That was in Crawfordsville, Iowa, which is in southeast Iowa.

Q: Your father was at that time in the bank?

MAK: He was cashier in a bank, yes.

Q: Cashier was a rather important job at that time, looking back?

MAK: These are small, tiny towns, but it was a job that had a certain status.

Q: Somebody might think of a cashier as somebody in a restaurant....

MAK: ....this is head of the bank, but not the owner.

Q: Do you recall what it was like, as a kid, to grow up in these small towns?

MAK: It was a very uneventful, pleasant sort of thing. You had your friends around you, and you'd go visiting people, stay overnight, which I hated. I always got homesick being away from home, I hated spending a night anywhere, unless my parents were there. I remember there was a building where movies were shown from time to time and where the American Legion post held an annual oyster soup evening. My father loved oysters. The grocery store would bring out a barrel of oysters every spring. We all had oysters and looked for pearls and often found one. If you found one in oyster stew, it would be cooked and no good. I remember that my parents did not approve of some of my friends, who at a very young age, were interested in sex.

Q: What age are we talking about?

MAK: How old was I?

Q: Yes.

MAK: We left there after I was in second grade..

Q: So there was a lot of "You show me yours and I'll show you mine".

MAK: Yeah, that sort of thing.. It was...rather....early. (Laughter) Rather...precocious.

Q: I don't know, I think I didn't have that much of an opportunity. If I had had a chance your mother wouldn't have liked me. (Laughter)

MAK: My mother was not very happy there. She came from a very cultured family - my father did, too, but my mother particularly so

Q: Having a mother and father who were both college graduates, for the era - I've been doing a lot of interviewing, including my own family - very few people were college graduates. It didn't mean they weren't educated, it meant an awful lot. Reading on Rome, an lectures. There was a lot of opportunity to improve oneself.

MAK: My grandfather Dayton had three degrees: he had a degree in liberal arts, he then got an engineering degree, and then his father-in-law dragged him back from Salt Lake City to Iowa City. He went back to university and got a law degree, and law became his profession.

Q: This was the grandfather on which side?

MAK: My mother's side. The Dayton family.

Q: Did you live near them or were the part of your family circle?

MAK: My grandparents?

Q: Yeah.

MAK: We never lived with them but we visited them often. As I said, they were what you call well off. They had a big house and servants...not a lot of servants - they had a cook, and they had a maid - but it was a very genteel life. My grandfather didn't have to work very much, because his wife had a lot of money, and her father didn't want him to work much. It wasn't until after he died that he could do his law practice. He was a wonderful man. He loved roses, he was a gardener. He had a beautiful rose garden, and he was a painter. He loved to paint in watercolor. I have some of his paintings. They would go to California each winter for a few months. Earlier, his father-in-law would take them to St Augustine, Florida, which was a great place to go in the winter. They would take the train and spend a certain amount of time in Saint Augustine. Later on, they discovered California, and they'd go to Pasadena and Los Angeles every winter. They lived a very nice life. Whenever we visited them, we benefited from what they had.

Q: As a kid - I grew up ten years younger than you - I grew up in Southern California, and I remember Long Beach, California, was renowned by having every few months an Iowa picnic. And they would have huge mobs of Iowans getting together because this is where people from Iowa, when they got a little bit older, got the hell out to Long Beach, or to Pasadena. My grandparents lived in Pasadena.

MAK: If you ever experience an Iowa winter, you'll know why they went (Laughter).

Q: (Laughter)

MAK: That's nice. I did forget to mention one thing. My father's parents were modestly well off...I don't think my grandfather ever went to college. My grandmother went to what they called a finishing school, so it was just a junior college, some place in western Iowa, She loved to paint, but she wasn't very good. My grandfather Dayton was good. My grandmother Mak was, shall we say, mediocre?

Q: As a kid - let's stick to the grammar school period first place, were you much of a reader, or were there subjects that intrigued you or that didn't?

MAK: I was a reader, a great reader. Early on, when I was in third grade, my eyes started going bad. I began to have astigmatism, near sight and all that, and of course they said “That's because you read too much”, but it wasn't, of course. I never stopped reading. I can't say that I read the things I ought to read, I just read a lot. Every Saturday, I'd go to the library, where they had books for youth. They had Boys' Life in there, and they'd have books that we would read. I remember when I was really very young, I got interested in Galsworthy...

Q: John Galsworthy.

MAK: John Galsworthy. One More the River. I read that, and I thought that it was simply wonderful. I've always read John Galsworthy, I think I've read everything he ever wrote. I read magazines, I read a lot. In those days - well, I - for Christmas, you got books. I remember reading Thanatopsis, and all the various authors you were supposed to read in those days. There wasn't much else to do.

Q: Were there any sort of books that really struck you or left a lasting impression?

MAK: I think, King Arthur. I remember I had a set of Kipling as well as books of the major poets. And of course, Tom Sawyer.

Q: Did you have those editions, I think it's Scribner's, with the paintings by N. C. Wyeth?

MAK: That's right. They were not very big. They had a red cover.

Q: I can't remember the series, but Scottish chiefs kidnapped...

MAK: That's right.

Q: ... and all these wonderful illustrations by N. C. Wyeth.

MAK: That's right, and they were all wonderful. I remember particularly Knights of the Roundtable, and Robin Hood, and things like that.

Q: Oh yeah.

MAK: They were wonderful. You could get whole sets of them.

Q: How did you deal with schools? Did you like the teachers? Did you like school?

MAK: Yes and no. I remember one favorite teacher in third grade. I followed her career. When she got married, and everything like that. She was wonderful. I liked school. Yes, I did. I really liked school. I wasn't an outstanding student; I was a good student, but I was not top of the heap. I loved it, I really did. The only thing I remember was in fourth grade we had to move to an annex, and we had a teacher who was very, very tough. She taught math, and I was never good at math. Consequently, I didn't like her. Other than that, in high school, in junior high school, I liked school. As a matter of fact, I was always very ready to go back to school after summer holidays.

Q: Let's talk a little about being a kid. Was there a sort of gang - and I'm using it in the good sense, not in the bad sensd - kids playing around after school, or doing things, or what did you do after school?

MAK: Oh yes, there were. There were different gangs. I was never in a gang, though my friends and I formed a group. We were a very mixed group, and we called ourselves “Ye Olde Pals”. There were about ten of us, a mix of athletes and non-athletes. The girls we dated were also from a fairly compact group. We would go on joint picnics and have joint parties. None of us smoked or drank alcohol. But that was not unusual, as practically no one our age smoke or drank.

Q:, I assume the streets were quite safe and you could roam around on your bike and go anywhere.

MAK: You could anywhere you wanted, you could go anywhere. We did go everywhere. We'd go roller skating, we'd go biking; we all had bikes. We had tennis courts about a mile away, and we walked to those or we'd take the bike and spend all day there. We belonged to a country club, which was at the other end of town. We'd take the streetcar there and play tennis. I didn't play golf.

Q: How about movies? Were movies important to you?

MAK: Oh yes! When we moved to Waterloo, Iowa, a city of about 40,000, there were three movie theaters and one other theater, where we would see Desert Song and all those wonderful old plays and musical comedies. One of the movie theaters presented a floor show with dancers and singers before the film. Saturdays were “Buffalo Nickel Day”, the price of admission was one buffalo nickel. Not a bad deal in those days of the big depression.

Q: Did any type of movie or any particular movie really stick in your memory?

MAK: I just remember a number of movies. I remember Wings....

Q: ...about World War I....

MAK: Yes.

Q: I saw that on TV about a month ago.

MAK: .... Birth of a Nation. I still remember one scene in Birth of a Nation. On Halloween we would go to the midnight movie and watch a scary movie. There were all these old

movie stars...Jean Harlow, Miriam Hopkins, Buddy Rogers, and lots of others. We went the movies about every Saturday afternoon.

Q: Oh yeah. Although there's some age gap there, these are an important part of our lives.

MAK: As I say, on Saturday, you'd get in for a buffalo nickel.

Q: Where did you go to high school?

MAK: West Waterloo High School. We went from Whittier Elementary School to West Waterloo Junior High School, which was in the same building as the high school. There were two grades of junior high and two grades of high school. It was a good school. I liked it.

Q: Do you recall any of the teachers?

MAK: Oh sure. I remember the principal, Mr. Gibson. He was a rather nice fellow. He was our science teacher. He was quite a Don Juan. He really went after the ladies. He was a very nice guy. I remember my French teacher. I kept up with her years later on; she became one of my father's clients. I remember my English teacher, who was an English woman, who insisted on our memorizing the opening stanzas of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

Q: Learning the Canterbury Tales, right?

MAK: That's right, and she would march up and down in cadence reciting this; so we all had to memorize it. I never forgot her. She was remarkable. She also taught Shakespeare, which was rather remarkable for a high school, I think.

Q: Let's talk about Waterloo. What was Waterloo about in those days, what was it like for a kid?

MAK: Waterloo was basically two things: it was industrial, and it was a farmer's market. Industrial; we had Rath, Packing Co., we had John Deere Tractor Company and we had Chamberlain. You know about John Deere tractors and farm equipment.

Q: Farming equipment, big farming machines.

MAK: Rath was of course hams and bacon, and so forth. I forgot what Chamberlain made. It was a labor town, but it was also the center for the farmers to come in and do their banking and do their shopping; so we had several department stores and furniture stores, and all that sort of thing. Then there were the movie theaters and restaurants. It was a mixture, but it basically depended on John Deere and Rath.

Q: During the summers or after school did you have any jobs or anything like that?

MAK: Only when I got to high school. Mind you, I was living there during the deep Depression. There weren't a lot of jobs. Adults were taking the jobs that kids would do now. It was only when I was in college that I had a full time summer job. That was with Rath Packing Company..

Q: What was your father doing? Was he continuing in banking? Let's talk about that and then the Depression.

MAK: When he left the banking business, from a small town called Ainsworth, Iowa, he moved to Waterloo to establish a branch office for an investment banking firm, which was owned by one of his roommates and his fraternity brothers at the University of Iowa. This investment banking firm was primarily, at that point, providing capital for bridges and things like that. My father would sell their bonds, primarily to banks throughout northeast Iowa. He also dealt in stocks and municipal bonds. After some years my father decided that he wasn't getting enough of the profits; so he established his own company, Leo Mak Inc. He

dealt in stocks and bonds, but his primary business was providing financing for a small loan company in Dubuque, Iowa.

Q: How about the Depression? How did that hit your father?

MAK: Absolutely devastating. He went from paper-rich to quite poor. He had my mother's money to back us up, but basically, he was poor. He just lost most everything. From beautiful cars, trips here and there, it was scraping.

Q: I was born in '28, so I experienced the Depression, but as a younger kid. We were poor, but really didn't know it. Everybody else was about the same way. Particularly for kids who didn't know any better. We'd still go to the movie. I think you paid a nickel, we paid twelve cents, or something like that...

MAK: Inflation (Laughter).

Q: Did you feel the Depression particularly?

MAK: No, I never did, because, as you said, that was what everyone was doing. I had a second-hand bicycle. I can't remember that I went without anything. My wishes were very small. I think the problem was what bothered my father was that my sister got to be college-age and they wanted her to go to a girls' school, a boarding school. They did, they got her a loan and sent her to Stevens, a girl's school in Columbia, Missouri.

Q: Oh yes, a very famous one.

MAK: She went there on a loan, and also got a scholarship. They gave her a scholarship, but after one year, he decided that they shouldn't do this, so she left there and went to the Iowa State Teachers College, which is now the University of Northern Iowa and only 20 miles from home in Cedar Falls, right next to Waterloo. That's where I went for the first two years, too.

Q: Religion. How important was religion in your family. Where did your family fall religious-wise?

MAK: We went to church, and I belonged to the Epworth League. My mother taught Sunday school. My father was not very interested in it, but he was interested in the sermons of the preacher. He would some times come home and say “That was a lousy sermon!”, or something like that. As a boy, I was very much involved with the church.

Q: Which church was this?

MAK: Methodist, First Methodist. They call them First Methodist Episcopal in those days. I was very much into it and always went to Sunday school. In summer we had certain activities, I've forgotten, what they were.

Q: Where did your family fall politically? Was your father or mother interested in politics?

MAK: Oh my goodness, yes! My father, as a matter of fact, ran for Congress as a Republican. He was swamped in the Democratic, Roosevelt landslide.

Q: I assume they were Republicans.

MAK: Oh yes. The only people who were Democrat were the Irish.

Q: Even as a kid, I remember, both being interested in the politics, being from a Democratic family, we'd sit and listen to the Fireside Chats. Politics were important, the New Deal. People knew the names of all the cabinet members, but also the news from abroad. The rise of Hitler, and all this. Did you find yourself engaged both in national politics and world politics?

MAK: Certainly in national politics. I remember the Fireside Chats very well. That was very important, and of course the NRA and all that was very big and hated by my father.

Q: I'm sure you get a lot of caustic comments, but everybody was involved.

MAK: Of course, everybody was involved; it was a big, big, big thing. At that time, I'm speaking about 1934, when I was in high school, politics didn't mean very much. The only thing I remember is that in one of our classes it must have been, we debated the topic "Should the US government require our World War I allies to pay their World War I debt?" We had to look up all the information we could find in the library, and decide which side we were on, and then have a debate. That's the only thing I recall.

Q: Well, you probably remember one of the prime things people would quote is the fact that Finland paid its World War I debt. This was a big field.

MAK: Absolutely. Other than that, no. I don't recall the rise of Nazism being at all on my scope. I remember Mussolini later on; "Well, he makes the trains run on time", that's all.

Q: My family on my mother's side was German. I remember my mother and the rest of her family took strong exception to Hitler. This was very much a (inaudible).

MAK: It really didn't play a big part at that time. Of course, later on it did.

Q: I think I know the answer, but did the profession of diplomacy ever cross your radar?

MAK: The only time it ever did was when I read a book about adventures of somebody in the Far East and it talked about the consul. That sounded like a wonderful deal.

Q: Sounds like Somerset Maugham.

MAK: It could be Somerset Maugham.

Q: ...and Jack London. These were the two.

MAK: I thought “Oh, gosh, that sounds wonderful.”, but in any depth, no. It was only frivolous.

Q: How about in high school? Did you get involved in any extracurricular activities of any kind?

MAK: I was on the debating team, and we had declamatory contest. I won that.

Q: When you say “declamatory”, could you explain what that means?

MAK: You memorize a speech and give it. That's basically it. I still remember part of it.

Q: What speech did you give, do you remember? Do you remember the speech at all?

MAK: I remember the opening lines, it was sort of stupid. Let's see. “I came to this country at the age of nine, one of a family of ten children.” That was the opening line.

Q: (Laughter)

MAK: Also, I liked music. I was in the Men's Glee Club and Mixed Chorus. I was not a good athlete, though I was good at track. I have a few funny stories. One is really funny. We were required to attend gym class, where we played all the sports. One time, when we were playing baseball and I was playing right field, the batter made a great hit, and the ball was coming right to me. Everyone started shouting: “Throw it to first! Throw it to first!” I got that ball and I aimed it at first, but, of course, it went to second, and our second baseman promptly put him out. Everyone thought I was so clever. I didn't say a word.

In basketball, I was the shortest one in the class. Naturally, the teams were picked by two captains, appointed by the coach. Each captain would choose his team, one by one. Our basketball coach, Strowbridge, was a nice fellow. He knew that I would probably get picked last; so he made me captain, and I would be the one to pick a team. I never forgot

that. I got two or three letters, one for Debate, one for Glee Club and one for something else, I don't remember. Maybe it was for track.

Q: What were the dating habits in those days at high school?

MAK: We had little groups. We had little groups of boys and little groups of girls, and we'd sort of get together with our own confederal group, and we'd date within our group. Of course, I always had one favorite, but she was everybody's favorite, too. Dorothea Gallagher. She was a marvelous dancer. Dating was a big deal. Saturday night dances were a big thing in our lives.

Q: We'd go through different eras, and in my era, probably the same as yours, we dated but there was not much of an equivalent to going steady. We were with a group and we took different people we went to the movies. We kind of went together, but at the same time, there was the big thing, you took the girl home and could you kiss her goodbye or not? This was fraught with anxiety, probably on both sides.

MAK: That's right - should I or shouldn't I? That's absolutely right, but it wasn't always true. Most in our group did not go steady. I remember one couple did, but they were a little different. No, we dated within the group. It was only in college when that changed.

Q: You graduated from high school when?

MAK: 1935.

Q: The Depression was really going full force.

MAK: Oh, it was.

Q: What did you do?

MAK: You mean, where did I go to college?

Q: Yeah.

MAK: I went to this teacher's college. We call it “TC”, Teacher's College, the Iowa State Teacher's College, where almost all of my friends were going.

Q: In a way, a bit today's equivalent to the community college, wasn't it?

MAK: It's probably like that, although it depends upon the quality; it was a good school. It was a good liberal arts school. Its primary goal was to train people to become teachers. One didn't have to take education courses, though my sister did. She graduated from there. I didn't, I went elsewhere.

Q: You went for two years, then?

MAK: I went two years there.

Q: You said you found the teaching pretty good. Did you like the teachers there?

MAK: Oh, yes! I thought they were good. I remember in particular my English teacher, who was unusually good. I have a story about him. Of course, this reflects on me nicely, or I wouldn't tell it. His name was Fagan. During the first week of school, he gave us certain drills and asked us questions to test our knowledge of English grammar. At the end of the Friday class, he said: “Mr. Mak”, I don't like you.” You can imagine how I felt. I suffered all weekend.

Q: Of course you did!

MAK: It was terrible! On Monday, at class, he said: “Mr. Mak, on Friday, I told you I didn't like you. I don't like you because you are the only one in this class who knows anything about English grammar”. And he laughed. He was a funny man. Once he told the class: “My ideal way of dying is to be submerged in a tub of whipped cream.”

Q: (Laughter)

MAK: He had a sense of humor. He asked me to give a definition for a tragedy. We were studying Shakespeare plays. He said: “Mr. Mak?” I replied: “It's a play in which the main characters are dead in the end.” The class roared, of course. Yes, I thought I got a good education there.

Q: In 1937, Europe is stirring, but it hasn't really blown up yet. When you finished there, where did you go?

MAK: I went to Arizona. I was somebody who suffered from sinus trouble and catarrh, which got so bad I could hardly talk. The doctor said: “You really ought to go to a dry climate.” Where do you go? I had been through Arizona on a trip, and I thought I'd really like to go to Arizona. I looked into it, and I applied to the University of Arizona. That's why I went to the University of Arizona.

Q: From '37 - '39?

MAK: A classmate of my parents at the University was a professor of law out at the University of Arizona; so I had a sort of an anchor.

Q: Where's the University of Arizona at that time? Was it at Tempe?

MAK: It was at Tucson. Arizona State is at Tempe.

Q: What was Tucson like?

MAK: Tucson, to me, was an absolute miracle. I loved it. I loved the desert, and the mountains around there are beautiful. The campus was really exquisite, very green, with palm trees and very attractive buildings. At night, they flooded the lawns. The next morning

everything was all green and everything was very nice. It was small. There were only about 2300 students. I was very happy there.

Q: When you got to class, was there a difference in interest or knowledge of your classmates from Iowa to Arizona?

MAK: Well I wouldn't say so. A large percentage of the students at Arizona were from the East, or the Midwest, or California. They're from all over. It attracted a lot of people who had health problems, such as asthma. It also attracted students whose parents had a lot of money and had winter homes in that area. There were even some wealthy drifters who seemed to be trying out schools in all parts of the country. There was quite a number of students from New York, New Jersey, Illinois and California. They came from all over the US.

Q: What were you majoring in?

MAK: Business.

Q: Business

MAK: Business administration.

Q: How did you find that?

MAK: Mediocre. Many of the professors had come to Arizona for health reasons. Some were very good, others were mediocre. However, those in the mining, astronomy and geology departments were very good.

Q: Did business turn you on, turn you off, interest you or not? How did you find it? What was your thought of business at the time?

MAK: I have to admit that it didn't really turn me on much. When I graduated, I was more interested in just finding a job.

Q: Of course, we're still talking about very difficult times. Did you find the students were looking more towards Europe or were you looking to Europe, or even to China and Japan?

MAK: I'd say we were all pretty much absorbed in the war in Europe. That's my recollection. There was much talk of the “phony” war and about Hitler and the Maginot Line. Nothing about the Far East interested us much.

Q: Was there a strong feeling of “This is something we have to stay out of”? I don't think “America First” particularly started at that time. Was there much sympathy for the Allied cause?

MAK: I don't recall there being any sympathy at all. It was something that was going on over there, and we should stay out of it. That was my recollection and feeling.

Q: How about social life at the university?

MAK: The social life was very active. We had fraternities and sororities. There also was another part that I was lucky to be involved in. I mentioned that my parents had a friend who was a law professor at the University. They had a son my age who was a member of the fraternity that I joined. He, being a “townie”, had a lot of town friends who were students. Some of them would include me in their picnics throughout the area. The parents of these friends had places in the nearby mountains or ranches in the area, which we would visit from time to time. This was a nice addition to my student life at Arizona.

Q: Did you have a chance to get out and explore the desert or the hills?

MAK: Oh yes. One of my best friends, whose father was the City Manager of Tucson, had an uncle who had a ranch, probably a hundred and some miles from Tucson. We

spent an Easter vacation at that ranch, having a wonderful time. We spent a lot of time in the mountains. Sabino Canyon was a favorite place to go. It is right near Tucson. This provided some minor mountain climbing.

Then there is Whitehouse Canyon to the south, toward Nogales and the Mexican border. Our friends had a house there, and we would occasionally picnic there. Nogales on the border was not far, and we would often drive there on weekends. We'd also go on trips in the desert.

Q: Was there much interest in school or on your part in the Indian culture in that area?

MAK: I didn't detect very much. We knew it was all around us, of course. No, I think we spent much time exploring the local Indian culture. It's a pity, but that's the way it was.

Q: You were taking business. What were you thinking of? Any particular aspect of business that you wanted to get into?

MAK: No, I'm afraid I was too naive for that. I took it so that I'd get a degree to get a job.

Q: Did they have ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) there?

MAK: Oh yes.

Q: Had you been there long enough or did you have to start in your freshman year?

MAK: No, I was a junior and wasn't required to. It was mounted Cavalry. Incidentally, The University of Arizona had the champion polo team the year before I came. A number of my fraternity brothers were on my polo team.

Q: What fraternity were you in?

MAK: SAE

Q: Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Was fraternity life important?

MAK: I found it so. The thing is, if you're coming from outside, you're entering a readymade group of people. I was lucky to get into one that had a pretty high scholastic standing, merely because we had this friend of mine - whose father my parents knew - was the salutatorian of our class. He was very bright and he kept the average of the fraternity up. We also had more football team members than any other fraternity. We were above average scholastically.

Q: How about downtown Tucson? Did you get down there? What was it like?

MAK: Oh yes, we would go down there. It was rather small. There were two main hotels, the Rio Rita (?) and the Pioneer Hotel. They were first-class hotels. Outside of Tucson, there were luxury hotels and resorts. We would visit the Goldwater department store and occasionally have dinner at one of the Mexican restaurants. I also had friends who lived in the center of town in a district commonly referred to as Snob Hollow. This was the oldest residential area of the city and considered the most prestigious. It has long since been torn down.

Q: Did you get much of a feel for Spanish culture, Mexican food, music?

MAK: Oh yes, that was a thing to do. We would go to restaurants and night clubs in the desert, where the music would be Mexican. We would learn the words, and sing them and that with great fun. The food, Mexican food, was powerful and wonderful. No-one would think of getting a hamburger in any place. You got Mexican food.

Q: Nogales - what did you do there, shall I ask?

MAK: In Nogales, we would basically go to have lunch in a particular restaurant, which was in a big cave. In Nogales, Mexico one could buy things duty-free down. Mostly it was

stuff one wouldn't think of buying here. I think perfume was supposed to be a bargain, though whether it was the genuine article I don't know.

Q: This is a very positive experience of your time.

MAK: I loved it.

Q: Did you think about, when you were getting ready to graduate, elsewhere to settle?

MAK: When I graduated, I only thought of one thing, and that was: “Where am I going to work”? In those days, you didn't go and live with your parents; you went and got a job. My father had connections with the Illinois Central Railroad, with the Comptroller. My father had handled the bonds of the railroad in some manner or form, I don't remember how that was. The controller invited me to come to Chicago for an interview with the railroad. I did, and I got the job in the Comptroller's department as a trainee. That was wonderful. That's what I did.

Q: You graduated in '39?

MAK: Yes.

Q: So you settled in Chicago?

MAK: Yes.

Q: How long did you have that job?

MAK: I had it until I was drafted.

Q: This would have been in '42 or 41'?

MAK: I was inducted into the army May 9, 1941.

Q: So you were in the draft before the war.

MAK: Yes.

Q: Let's talk about the time in Chicago. What were you doing?

MAK: As I said, I was a trainee. They put me in various departments having to do with auditing and bookkeeping and that sort of thing. I would go for one month in one department and one month in another, and another, and another. When I finished those, they then sent me to one of their offices on 69th Street, I think it was, where the traveling auditors were located. I was assigned to one of the Traveling Auditors. I would accompany him on trips throughout the country, helping audit the various stations. We'd go down to New Orleans and audit the stations along the line, and other places along the line. I was particularly happy that I was given passes for not only the Illinois Central, but I also got a Pullman pass and one on the Pennsylvania Railroad. I could use these passes on weekends as well as when I was working. It was great! My last job was to go down to Lyman, Mississippi, to supervise the loading of watermelons onto a boxcar. Someone had invented a triangular tube that would be installed between the rows of the watermelons being loaded so they that would remain stable. When they arrived at the destination in Chicago, they would not be all smashed. Apparently it was successful, because the Comptroller wrote my father a letter, telling him “you'll be proud to know that the cars that Dayton supervised were the best of the year”. I was promoted from $125 a month to $135 a month.

Q: How did you feel about when the draft started? This was...

MAK: ...early '41.

Q: Yes

MAK: I thought: “Never going to happen to me, I'm too important. I'm working for the railroad.”

Q: Do you remember your number?

MAK: No.

Q: It was a 1-35-6 in my mind as the first number drawn out of the...

MAK: I don't remember mine at all. But it was drawn very early.

Q: What did you see as your future with the railroad?

MAK: I thought I'd grow with the railroad and become something in the auditing department, Comptroller or something like that. One could actually become president or something like that. It was possible in those days. You could have done anything.

Q: How was Chicago? How did you find Chicago?

MAK: I loved Chicago. I think Chicago is my favorite city. I loved it. I lived in Hyde Park on the South side, which is not the prestigious place to live, but I loved it. At first I lived at the YMCA and later moved into an apartment with three other men. I took the train into the Loop, which was an Illinois Central train, so I had a pass. Too, I had relatives up on the North Shore, and I'd visit them often. I had friends who were also living in Hyde Park.

Q: Did you become a fan of the architecture there at all?

MAK: Yes, in an uninformed way. The Tribune Building to me was a very beautiful temple. The Sears Tower had, of course, not been built, or any of those. Just even the Stevens Hotel, which was marvelous. Then there was the planetarium and the buildings of the University of Chicago in Hyde Park. I think the Chicago lakefront is one of the most beautiful cityscapes in the US.

Q: I was born in Chicago, though I moved to California, but my family's basically a Chicago family.

MAK: I like it very much.

Q: Did you begin to feel the hot breath of the European war or not?

MAK: Oh, it was the major topic when I was there. One of my bosses was a German immigrant, he had a German accent, and he and his brother worked for the railroad in the same department. They, of course, were violently opposed to our getting involved in the war. It was a big topic. That was the main topic, what was going on in Germany, and then in France and Europe. There were lots of arguments for and against our getting involved in the war.

Q: Just to give a flavor of the times, were woman at all in the ranks that you were or were they strictly secretarial type?

MAK: They were all secretarial. They did the keypunch things, and they did the typing. Things like that.

Q: When did the draft hit you?

MAK: I had a low draft number; so I was drafted early, May 9th 1941. I went to the Chicago armory to be inducted, then to Camp Grant for inoculations and then sent to Camp Davis, North Carolina.

Q: Tell me a little about getting inducted into the army in those days.

MAK: I was surprised, because I thought my marginal eyesight and flat feet would make me ineligible, but not at all; I was in perfect shape for the army. So, I reported on May 9th, 1941 to the headquarters of the draft in the Hyde Park section of Chicago, where they loaded us onto a bus and took us to the armory in Chicago, where we were sworn

in, and then we were loaded onto a train and sent to Camp Grant, where we were given vaccinations and outfitted, We spent a night or two there getting uniforms and other equipment, and then we were put on another train bound for Camp Davis, which was about twenty miles south of Wilmington, North Carolina

Q: What was it like to meet your comrades? Did you get any feel for them?

MAK: I honestly think I think I felt that I really wasn't where I wanted to be, doing something I didn't really want to do.

Q: Now that I think back on my time and it's hard to find the right words for it. So what was your feeling on the world situation? We weren't in the war yet, but the war was going on in Europe. Did you ever feel like what was this all about?

MAK: Well during my last years at college, the war in Europe was sort of standstill. There was much talk about the stalemate and the Maginot Line. Nothing seemed to be happening; so in a way we were encouraged to think that nothing would happen, and that we would serve our nine months or so and then go home, I said to myself, “In nine months I'll be back at my job in Chicago.” Well, of course, Pearl Harbor changed all that.

Q: What were you getting for basic training?

MAK: I was put into an anti-aircraft training unit. Camp Davis was used for primarily for anti-aircraft basic training. We hiked a lot, endured early morning calisthenics, attended classes on how to be good soldiers, and were taught how to fire, maintain and repair all sorts of guns. The weather was hot, rainy and miserable, and there was lots of mud and mosquitoes. I was not a happy camper.

Q: Mak, if I may interject here, at the beginning of the war we had a considerable investment in coast artillery: big guns, five or so inches, which of course were never used. At the time was there a pretty good mixture of kids from different backgrounds?

MAK: My organization was almost entirely made up of young men who worked in the auto industry in Michigan. They were skilled. There were three of us who were college graduates, from completely different from the others in background and education.We all got along fine with one another despite our differences.

Q: Back then they were segregated, white units and black units. There was no mixture of the races. But how did you, who were unskilled and they, who had pervious mechanical experience, manage to get along? How did you three fit in?

MAK: We three were sort of misfits. We did, however, get along well with the others, though our relationships were not close. I can only tell you about my own case. I graduated from university and high school and I also knew how to type; so they thought I could be useful in the Battery Commander's office. There I did staff work and apparently was useful. Occasionally, I was sent to camp Headquarters where I found the work and the environment agreeable. Eventually I was offered a transfer to the Base Finance Office, which I eagerly accepted. I can truthfully say that for the first time, I actually enjoyed being in the Army.

Q: And this was somewhat parallel to your work with the railroad wasn't it?

MAK: Yes it was. I enjoyed it very much. The people I worked with there were mainly from the South and the New York City area. I was the sole Mid-westerner. They were very congenial and we got along well.

Q: Well, I'm trying to capture the times, people were thinking that we weren't going to get into the war and this was like a nine-month campout or something?

MAK: Well, I think at that time all of us still had our eye on getting out. At that time anyone over 28 was automatically released. I think this also included some married men. Our

thoughts were certainly on getting out. I think that most of us were mildly opposed to our getting involved in the War.

Q: In about June, when all hell broke loose in Europe, when Russia's Nazi armies attacked Norway and France, and France fell and by early fall the Battle of Brittan was under way; it was an air battle. That must have made the war seem more serious.

MAK: Yes, in a way. But, there was a really strong movement to keep America out of the war.

Q: Yes, America First.

MAK: Yes, the America First movement was very strong and it was sort of in the balance. Our thought, of course, was, “Let's don't get into it. I don't want to get killed.” It was a natural reaction to it.

Q: Well, coming from the Mid-west, the Mid-west is not a hot bed of internationalism, but you had people coming from the south, there is a strong military tradition in the south, so I was wondering did you find yourself isolated from the group?

MAK: No, the group I was with, most of us felt the same

Q: ow did you find your connection to the officer corps at the time what was your impression of the officers?

MAK: The ones I came in contact with were excellent, but I believe that I was treated better than most because I was a college graduate. I felt the officers had a very positive rapport with the three of us college graduates.

Q: Was anybody talking to you about OCS (officer candidate school)?

MAK: Yes. The OCS for anti-aircraft officers was at Camp Davis. All of us were invited to apply if were interested. Those who were interested were then given special examinations. If you passed, you moved from one side of the camp to the other.

Q: I'm looking at a few things you mentioned, some notes and a travel voucher

MAK: Oh yes, that was interesting. One of my duties in the finance department was to service the incoming officers, who came in from all over the country to be stationed there at Camp Davis. They would come with families, some without, and we would reimburse them for their travel expenses. Preparing travel vouchers and paying these officers' vouchers was one of my duties. Months later, as we were approaching the end of the OCS course, the first sergeant, addressing the assembled class announced: “The course is about over. None of you can be certain of passing this course except Mr. Mak”. I was stunned and embarrassed. When we were dismissed, I went to the sergeant and asked, “What is this?” He replied, “What do you mean? Don't you recognize your CO (commanding officer)?” I said, “No”. He then told me, “When you were in the Finance department, he says he came through as an officer with his family, and he had no money; he was broke. He gave you the information for his reimbursement voucher. You told him it would be ready the following day. He asked if there was some way it could be done sooner. You said in that case you would have it ready in fifteen minutes. He didn't forget that, and he didn't forget your name or your face; so I passed. I was ranked squarely in the middle of the class. And that's the story.

Q: Well, it shows you have the human touch. Considering how nasty some clerks can be in a big organization... So when did you go into OCS?

MAK: That must have been the fall of 1942

Q: There was a movement in early fall of 1941 of enlisted ranks called OHIO, does that ring a bell with you?

MAK: Over the Hill in October. Yes, but no one I know was involved. It didn't seem very decent or proper.

Q: It was sort of camp rumor and talk, wasn't it?

MAK: Yes. But no one I knew took it seriously.

Q: Where were you and how did the news of Pearl Harbor hit you?

MAK: I was lying on my bunk, listening to the radio. Suddenly, the program was interrupted to report that the Japanese were bombing Pearl Harbor. This hit us like a bombshell. I think we all knew that we weren't going home any time soon. It was depressing news, to say the least.

Q: Did you have the feeling as you were an enlisted man and you were getting involved in anti-aircraft that we were prepared for war?

MAK: From what I saw, I felt we were doing fairly well. We had plenty of armor (Tanks), we had big guns, small guns; we had been to the target range and shot. We did fairly well.As far as the big picture was concerned, I don't think we gave much thought to whether or not the country was prepared for war.

Q: How was OCS?

MAK: OCS was meant to be very tough and it was. There was a lot of, “Yes, sir, yes, sir,” drilling. There were countless inspections of all sorts, much drilling, class work learning about anti-aircraft computers, etc. Each morning there was an inspection of our barracks, during which about everything in our possession was inspected for cleanliness, neatness and general appearance. This included, in particular, the shine and positioning of our shoes and, most important, the appearance of our cots and foot lockers.. In order to approach perfection, most of us would sleep on top of the bed, making tidying up a

matter of a few seconds. In the morning, one could quickly pull it all together, leaving the bedclothes tight as a drum. Of course, our shoes had to be polished brilliantly. There, I was fortunate. And we never touched anything in our footlockers to mess them up. My friends in the finance department were very helpful. Each day one of them would come and collect the pair of shoes I had worn that day, shine them and return them in time for the daily inspection. I was always had a pair of well shined shoes beside my bunk.

Q: I ended up, when I was in the air force, I had a pair of shoes that didn't fit which was great, I just kept them polished and out for inspection at all times.

MAK: That's right. We learned lots of helpful tricks. I learned to carry nothing in my pockets during an inspection. Once during inspection I had a handkerchief in my pocket and was given a demerit for carrying an orange in my pocket.

Q: You mentioned the haircut.

MAK: Yes, they just sheared it off.. It took the barber about thirty seconds to cut your hair. Cost; fifty cents.

Q: Well, I image being anti-aircraft artillerymen you had to be good at mathematics.

MAK: You're supposed to be, and some were good at math and others were not. I was one who was not. Luckily, I had a good memory in those days and was able to pass a test in basic trigonometry by boning up on some basic formulae, which I knew applied to the location of moving aircraft in the air. I did not figure this out all on my own, however; I had been tipped off by someone who had been through the course. So, .I passed. I was impressed because in high school, algebra was the only subject in which I ever got a D.

Q: What sort of studies did you have at OCS (Officer Candidate School)?

MAK: I honestly don't remember much about the course of study. I recall that we all were required to take turns in drilling the class in marching; we had small arms training, military

courtesy and discipline classes and many others. We also had a class in which we studied the workings of an anti-aircraft computer. This always remained a mystery to me, ass it did to most others. We understood what it was supposed to do, but we didn't really understand how it did it.

Q: How did you do?

MAK: I scored in the middle of the class.

Q: So, were they getting you ready to be purely artillery officers, or were they getting you read to be officers where you could be assigned to an infantry company?

MAK: Well, the idea was that you would be signed to anti-aircraft artillery. It didn't mean that you couldn't be assigned to something else, but it was basically for anti-aircraft artillery.

Q: So were you headed for anti-aircraft artillery or artillery per se?

MAK: Ours was solely anti-aircraft.

Q: What did we have against anti-aircraft in those days?

MAK: We had the Bofors, which were 40mm guns. Then, there were 38mm machine guns; we had four of those. Then we had the big guns; they were 90mm but our outfit didn't work with those. We were strictly automatic anti-aircraft units. Our job was to protect against low flying planes

Q: After you graduated from OCS where did you go?

MAK: I went to Fort Eustis in Virginia, where I was put on hold until I was given a unit. Then I was sent to New Jersey to Camp Kilmer, to wait shipment overseas. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of us there in Camp Kilmer awaiting shipment...Finally, in

January of 1943, several hundred of us were put on a train a New Jersey port, where we boarded the S.S. Cristobal. This small ship had been a luxury liner plying between the Panama Canal Zone and New York, carrying Zone families back and forth on home leave. It was a nicely appointed ship, and we officers were well treated. During the voyage we read books, played cards and marveled at the vast armada of ships in our convoy. There must have been easily one hundred ships making up the convoy. My recollection is that we had cargo ships, destroyers, cruisers, battleships and other troop ships like ours. We were served by the dining room stewards, and we even had to tip. The food was good. The voyage was uneventful though we often were aware of depth charges exploding near us. I assume that these were anti-submarine charges. It was a bit unnerving, nevertheless. Incidentally, the troops below deck kept running games o poker and crap-shooting throughout the voyage. Rumor had it that several sharks made a killing during the voyage.

Q: At what time were you shipped over seas?

MAK: That had to be in January of 1943.

Q: By that time, November or October of 1942, we had invaded Northern Africa; so we already were established in Africa.

MAK: While we were waiting for assignments, I remember a number of people we knew had been assigned to units in Egypt. We had correspondence with friends giving hint as to where they were. But we had no idea where we were going when we boarded the ship.

Q: What was Camp Kilmer like?

MAK: It was in the winter when and very cold. There were just row upon row of barracks. I don't remember any other thing. It was cold. The barracks very new and were inadequately heated. I recall that the window glass still bore their labels .

Q: I went through Camp Kilmer ten years later in the Cold War. I had been in Korea and then I came back and then I went to Germany, so we both have seen the lovely Camp Kilmer. Except, I had a distinction in my little outfit. I was a corporal and I was put in charge of the work detail, and we had the cleanest latrine in the area so we all got passes to New York. It was probably my greatest military accomplishment. (laughs) Did you get a chance to see the fleshpots of New York?

MAK: I went to New York on New Years Eve to have a final good time. I had been there about an hour when I felt my throat getting scratchy, and I began to feel shivery. So, I gave up any plans for a New Year's Eve in New York and took a train back to Camp Kilmer, .and spent New Year's Eve in bed.

Q: So much for the fleshpots. What about, you're getting good food, but this is at the peak of U-boat time in the Atlantic.

MAK: You know, the convoy was really something. There must have been around a hundred vessels in the convoy. As far as the eye could see, reaching the horizon in all directions, one saw ships; merchant ships, battleships, destroyers, cruisers, and troop ships. All were in formation except the destroyers, which were continuously weaving in and out through the convoy. From time to time we would hear loud thumps coming from the water, presumably from depth charges dropped by the destroyers. We were all very conscious of the possible presence of German submarines in the area. It was a nervous ride. I remember that after passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, we began seeing American aircraft, which escorted us the rest of the way to Algeria. Incidentally, once we approached Gibraltar, the convoy began breaking up as some ships, mostly merchant vessels, made for ports along the route in Europe and North Africa.

Q: By that time, I guess the British and American troops had pretty well taken over Algeria and was the battle with Tunisia sort of underway at the time?

MAK: No, not yet. As I recall, they were still cleaning up Algeria. We pulled into Oran, which, by that time was well secured, and we were sent west along the coast to a camp in Canastel, just west of the city of Oran. Canastel was a small, attractive suburb with a casino and many handsome residences. We soon learned that the residents were middle class French colonists, who were very welcoming. Our camp, consisting of a sea of tents' was a replacement camp or “repo-depot”.

Q: And that's where they would take troops who came in on convoys and assign them to units? How long were you there?

MAK: I think maybe a couple weeks, and then I was assigned to my first outfit, 434th Anti Aircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion. We were assigned to perimeter defense of La Cygne airport, an airport a few miles outside of Oran. It was also an American aircraft base. I think there were light B-26 bombers. While there we basically guarded the base and did some target practice.

Q: Were there any German attacks?

MAK: Yes. While we were there, the port of Oran was attacked by German bombers. We were only spectators, but it was our first experience with enemy activity. Our only worry was from falling shrapnel.

Q: What was the 434th like?

MAK: There were four batteries; A, B, C, and D, and each one had four guns pulled by trucks. . Our guns were 37mm Bofors and 50 caliber machine guns.

Q: At that time, the Germans, particularly in the desert war, had had a great success in taking what amounted to a German anti-aircraft gun, the 88mm, the famous “German 88,” and turning it into a flat trajectory and a tank gun. Was there any attempt with your outfit to use or to be ready to move your anti-aircraft guns into a tank and a tank-gun?

MAK: Oh yes, that was later on, in Italy, at Casino and later. We did exactly that when we were supporting one of the infantry divisions trying to take Casino.

Q: We'll come to that later, but I was wondering had there been any training before that?

MAK: No, I don't remember being trained in that.

Q: How long were you at Oran guarding the airport?

MAK: I think just maybe two months. It wasn't long.

Q: Had Tunisia surrendered?

MAK: No. We were sent from Oran to Tunisia. On route to Tunisia, we observed Cape Bonn being bombed. We could see and hear the bombing and the anti-aircraft fire in the distance, but we were perfectly safe.

The first time we were actually attacked was in Tunisia as we were on our way to join an artillery unit which we would be providing anti-aircraft protection. Evening came and we were preparing to bivouac for the night in the woods adjacent to the highway. We had eaten and were in the process of cleaning up and doing some needed laundry. Not giving it a thought, we hung laundry on the tree branches and bushes to dry. Suddenly we heard aircraft approaching just above the low-hanging clouds. We quickly realized that these planes were MIGs, and we dashed for cover in the woods. Quickly the planes had turned around and came back just above tree level, spraying bullets around us. It was over in seconds, but it left us all very much shaken. I know that I hit the ground behind a tree and held my breath. None of us was hurt, but we learned an important lesson in what not to do, even in areas far from the battle field.

Q: I mean it was probably one of the last times when the air forces were about equal.

MAK: All our time in Tunisia, we never saw many US aircraft except when we were protecting them at US airbases. We did see German MIGs. Our outfit shot down a number of them. The first must have been in Tunisia when we supporting our artillery. I'm a bit hazy on that.

Q: Were you near the battle of the Kasserine Pass?

MAK: That was where we were supposed to go to join the First Armed Regiment, which was in that area; but we didn't get there in time. We were bivouacked in a Roman ruin about the time of the big battle of Kasserine, where the first armor was creamed. One of my roommates in college was a tank commander there and was badly wounded in that .battle. We missed Kasserine, and we finally caught up with them in the Mateur area.

Q: First off, the Battle of Kasserine was when the American army first really came up against the first line German forces and was badly beat. Looking back, it was a matter of not very good generalship.

MAK: I think that had to be it. Our people apparently just bottled up. I'm no theorist on that, but that's what I gather. They took a risk that they should not have taken.

Q: Well I'm told that the Africa corps of the attack was stopped pretty much by American artillery. Did you get any feel for that this actually, Colonel Westmorland brought some heavy concept and was able to lay down pretty heavy.

MAK: My recollection is that the tank battle at Mateur, which is north of Kasserine, was perhaps the deciding battle. And that. I remember passing through there afterwards, but that's about all.

Q: How was your unit being used?

MAK: I don't remember the exact chronology, but after that we were swung over to the coast to join the French infantry, which were Moroccan troops as I recall. Our U.S. artillery was in support of them, and we were in support of our artillery. I don't remember which division it was. It could have been the Third or the 45th division, I don't remember. We were attached to the artillery of so many Divisions throughout Africa and Italy, that it is all a blur. We did have a lot of unpleasantness, because artillery draws enemy artillery fire and enemy planes. One got very adept at “digging in”.

Q: When you say unpleasantness... they were firing on you?

MAK: Yes, they were firing on the artillery we were protecting. So of course, we had to be close by and would consequently receive any shelling or bombing directed at the artillery.

Q: Well, basically you were there to give anti-aircraft cover to the artillery. Were German airplanes coming at you?

MAK: My recollection of enemy air attacks on our artillery is hazy. I do remember that we fired on many German aircraft, particularly in Tunisia. Nevertheless, enemy artillery were the biggest danger for us.

Q: Did you have much contact with the French troops or were you basically protecting American artillery, which was working with the French?

MAK: The troops we saw were the Ghoums (I believe they were North Africans), who were the French infantry in that sector. We saw them but didn't have much contact with them. We were constantly moving as Allied troops pursued the retreating German forces. This meant driving the Germans back from one djebel (mountain) to another djebel en route to Bizerte. It was one mountain after another all the way.

Q: Well, did you have the feeling that you were part of some victorious or basically victorious movement to get the Germans out?

MAK: I recall that we pretty much felt that this would go on forever; one djebel after another. We kept hoping that the next one would be the last. I don't think we had any grand thought of victory. I do remember, though, that we did have the foolish idea that after we finished Tunisia we might be rotated home. Silly idea!

Q: But did you get any feel about the African corps?

MAK: The Afrikorps was only a myth to us. Afrikorps was gone by the time we were in Tunisia.

Q: Bizerte was really the end, that's when they captured about 100,000.

MAK: Yes. We moved into Bizerte along the coast. When w got there, it was in the hands of the Allies. We set up camp, and all was quiet. Soon we were slowly pulled out of the Bizerte area and sent over to the area of Tunis, where we were assigned to one airfield after another for antiaircraft protection. At times we were on fighter fields, both US and British, and sometimes at light and heavy bomber fields.

Q: It would probably be the B-24s, which would be the Liberator; those were the big planes that were used in that part of the war.

MAK: Our Battalion was split up, with each battery assigned to a separate airfield.

Q: Did you get involved in the Sicilian campaign?

MAK: During the Sicily operation we were stationed at an RAF field near Djedeida, a town south of Tunis. Their aircraft participated in the Sicily invasion, but we remained at the airfield.

Q: As they were moving up towards the invasion of Italy proper, Salerno, did that involve you?

MAK: No, it only involved us insofar as we were protecting the airfields that were doing the bombing and sending the paratroopers over.

Q: Was there much attack on the German side in Tunisia?

MAK: They were bombing the port of Bizerte; but I don't recall their bombing Tunis. While we were in the Tunis area, we watched from afar the night bombings of Bizerte. It was in this Tunis area that we first observed the nighttime operation we called “Bed-check Charlie.” This was a German plane which each night circled slowly over Allied lines. He never made an aggressive move. I think he was telling us “We know where you are”.

Q: When did you move to Italy?

MAK: We didn't move to Italy until after Sicily was taken and our troops had already landed at Salerno. Also, Italy had surrendered and was out of the war.

Q: Looking at some of your notes here, you mentioned an RAF field with Spitfires. Were you protecting a British RAF base at one point?

MAK: Yes, we were protecting the RAF at the base. I don't know why we were at a British base, but we were. The British were very nice to us. We would trade chocolate bars and whisky, and some them would take a meal with us and we with them. It was a very congenial arrangement.

Q: Did you get a chance to do any sight seeing while you were there?

MAK: Yes, when we were in the Tunis area. We would go into Tunis fairly often. Tunis was basically undamaged, and had some attractive restaurants and bars. It was, in fact, a very attractive city. Several of us met some local French people, who invited us to Hammamet, a popular seaside resort.

Q: Had you learned any French?

MAK: I had taken French in high school and college, and of course, I spoke it like a schoolboy. But it was enough to get along with the local French, who were very welcoming.

Q: In the Foreign Service, Tunisia has always been a nice comfortable post.

MAK: Tunisia is a beautiful country. It has Carthage as well as a number of impressive Roman ruins to visit. The climate is pleasant, and the Tunisians are friendly and hospitable.

Q: I noticed you mentioned Carthage.

MAK: Oh yes, one had to visit the impressive ruins at Carthage. The town itself is also most attractive. I think the town there is called Sidi bou Said.

Q: When you were leaving Tunisia, I noticed you moved to re-equipment, half-tracks?

MAK: We were transformed into an armored, mobile unit. Our guns were mounted on half-tracks. The advantage to the mobile units was that the artillery could be brought into action immediately. No more hitching and unhitching from trucks. There were four guns plus machine guns on each half-track. We were to pick them up in Algiers; so a group of us drove by jeep along the beautiful coast of Algeria and Tunisia to Algiers, a several days' journey. We arrived at the outskirts of Algiers in the early evening and were welcomed by air raid sirens and the beginning of an air raid. Searchlights were illuminating the balloons, which were protecting the city, and enemy flares and allied anti-aircraft tracers were filling the sky. The noise was terrific, with the exploding bombs and anti-aircraft fire. Though we were a safe distance from the target area, we still had to be aware of flying shrapnel from the anti-aircraft fire. That was our exciting welcome to Algiers.

We checked in to the local US military headquarters and were assigned to a small hotel. We had a pleasant week in Algiers “supervising” the loading of our half-tracks and other equipment. Fortunately, there were no further air raids.

Q: At that point, had we gone into Salerno? Basically, you were getting ready for the Italian campaign.

MAK: Our troops had landed at Salerno, and we followed some weeks later, landing at Naples. The harbor was devastated. The landing docks were gone, and we walked along wooden planks from the ship to the dock. The area stunk terribly of rotting flesh. The port buildings and the nearby castle had been bombed, and the corpses of the occupants were still inside. The whole are was a sea of stinking devastation.

Q: When did you get there?

MAK: I don't remember exactly. I remember the port was devastated. I recall that the first night we were there, just after dark, the port was attacked by German aircraft. Suddenly sirens went off and anti-aircraft firing filled the sky. Suddenly the port was enveloped in smoke. We learned that this was to hide targets from the German aircraft which were targeting the port.

We knew that we should stay inside the ship to avoid any anti-aircraft shrapnel, but on the other hand we didn't want to be caught inside if the ship were bombed. So, we stayed outside and watched. Fortunately, the smoke screen was effective, and the planes abandoned the port and sought other targets in the area, Mt. Vesuvius was becoming active, the flame and lava providing a handy beacon for the German aircraft.

The following day we unloaded and joined our outfit, which had moved into one of the volcano craters to the west of Naples. We camped in there, feeling secure in the crater, with its steep walls and vegetation. We felt secure from any bombing raids on Naples

port. There we got acquainted with our new half tracks and other equipment and generally prepared to go into action

Q: Did you get into Naples at all?

MAK: Oh yes, we went into Naples occasionally. Not so much that time, but later on. This time we were pretty busy. I do remember going through the tunnels fairly often, back and forth.

Q: The tunnels go back to Emperor Augustus I think. I was consul general in Naples from 1979-1981.

MAK: The war was over by then.

Q: You hadn't done too good a job, but it was over enough. (laughs)

MAK: And Sophia Loren supposedly was living in one of those tunnels while we were there.

Q: A well-known movie star beauty. Did you get some new half-tracks, some new equipment?

MAK: Yes, new half-tracks with all of these new automatic weapons on them. So, we were completely armored, mobile and automatic.

Q: Well what was the feeling? If planes came over you could spread out and put up a lot of fire?

MAK: As a matter of fact with these half-tracks, we could shoot both at land and air targets. We were quite versatile and could move quickly from one place to another/

Q: By the time you were sort of debarking from Naples, where was the fifth army at that point?

MAK: It was north of Caserta. I remember that we passed through Caserta en rout to our first assignment.

Q: What is the big river just above Caserta?

MAK: The Volturno?

Q: Yes, by the time you get there, had they crossed the Volturno?

MAK: You know, I get my rivers mixed. There seemed to be so many, and each was an obstacle to our forces. The rivers were an excellent advantage for the Germans in their defense. The bridges of most of them were destroyed, which meant that pontoon bridges had to be constructed or the rivers had to be forded at shallower points.

Q: I get them mixed too.

MAK: I think our forces had crossed the river at Capua, and Caserta had been free for some time.. In fact, the headquarters of the Fifth Army was in the palace there at Caserta.. I think we trained to cross the Volturno, but I'm not certain. As I say, there were so many rivers that we had to cross, and I get them mixed up.

Q: Anyway, eventually what did they do to you? We had a front all across Italy when you got there. And what did they do with you?

MAK: Primarily, we were attached to field artillery units. Wherever the artillery was, we would provide them anti-aircraft protection. I'm speaking of before Anzio and north of Naples. Actually, I believe we were protecting infantry in river crossings as well as

protecting field artillery. However, we were generally with field artillery, following them wherever they went.

Q: Had you gone to mountain school?

MAK: Yes, at some point before the winter set in I was sent a to winter mountain training school at a resort in Central Italy where Mussolini used to ski. I think it was at Mt. Termanillo. The school was run by the son of a famous British arctic explorer, and we trainees were both British and American. We went through courses of mountain climbing, repelling, crossing canyons, as well as learning how to manage skis and snowshoes.

Q: What did you think of Caserta? Did you go through Caserta?

MAK: Yes, my uncle was a major general, and he invited me to lunch. So I had lunch there in that beautiful palace with its marvelous cascade of water.

Q: Were you picking up any feelings about Mark Clark?

MAK: I don't think we gave him much thought.

Q: Where did you join combat?

MAK: Through Tunisia and until Casino, we were always in a moving front situation. Technically, we were always in “combat”, though often somewhat on the fringes. That changed when we reached the Casino front. From then on, we were in a truly constant combat situation. At Casino we were in direct support to an infantry combat division. You may recall that the Rome to Naples railway runs through the pass below Casino. The tracks had been removed leaving the exposed roadbed. We were assigned the job of protecting our infantry at night, not just against enemy aircraft, but against enemy infantry. . So, each evening, we would run our half-tracks up the tracks below Casino near our infantry positions and spend the night hours in place. As dawn approached, we would draw back to our original positions. Presumably, we were there to reinforce our infantry

troops if they should be attacked during the night. That was a pretty scary operation. Otherwise, we were largely in position on hills around Casino, guarding against any enemy aircraft that should appear. The Luftwaffe was active in that area.

Q: You mention the German mortar called the Nebelwerfer. What was that?

MAK: We experienced the Nebelwerfer some time after we left Naples and were en route to join a field artillery unit. We had dug in along the highway for the night when suddenly we heard this strange, very loud, whirring, whining scream, and then mortar shells rained down, one after the other, right down the line through our area. This was a new experience for us, and a most unpleasant one. From then on, whenever we heard that weird whining scream, we immediately hit the dirt and waited.

Q: These were basically rocket mortars, right?

MAK: Yes, they were mortars fired successively rather than singly.

Q: it was mortars, but big shells.

MAK: Big shells. They would shake you up.

Q: You mentioned Mount Trocchio.

MAK: Mount Trocchio was a most impressive battle. We were with field artillery and were dug in on the back side of Mount Rotundo, one of the mountains adjacent to Mount Cassino. Also adjacent to Mount Cassino but on another side was Mount Trocchio. As I recall, if one could capture Trocchio, one could open up another area from which to attack Cassino, which was blocking Allied troops from moving up the valley leading to Rome.

The Allied attack on Trocchio was tightly coordinated and began in the dark of night. The attack was preceded by a fierce Allied artillery bombardment of Trocchio. Meanwhile, we

were to move slowly from Rotundo along the side of another mountain and take positions on Trocchio once it was secured.

That was a night to remember. The Germans sent up flares, illuminating and exposing the scene and blasting it with artillery and small arms fire. All was crashingly noisy. We kept moving slowly and bumpily in our ragged convoy, feeling very exposed and vulnerable to artillery fire. Mt Trocchio was ablaze with artillery explosions, and the night was like day from the flares and bursting artillery shells, incoming and outgoing.. It was utter bedlam - and scary as the dickens. I think we all performed like automatons. No one spoke a word, and waiting for what might happen. We were very careful not to show the slightest indication of fear. Fear can be contagious.

Q: You mentioned here a landmark that I don't think is on today's map, called Shit Corner.

MAK: That was a crossroads of two highways which converged at a pass which fed into the Cassino valley. Nearly everything had to pass through this pass en route to our troops facing Cassino. Obviously that was a target for German aircraft and artillery. One had to make a dash through and hope for the best. This was one of several such corners we encountered in Italy. Each was tense gamble.

Q: During all this time, were you looking up at that Monastery of Cassino? Was that sort of in your eye the whole time?

MAK: Oh yes, it was there all the time. Wherever you were, it was up there taunting you, Our unit spent considerable time on Mount Rotundo, which was in full view of Cassino. We were very exposed and were getting shelled from time to time. After many unsuccessful attempts by Allied troops to capture the monastery, the USAF was called in to bomb it. It was an incredible sight. We watched it all from our position on Mt. Rotundo. The bombardment went on for two days, wave after wave of light and heavy bombers dropping

their loads on the monastery. Though the monastery was destroyed, the Germans were not dislodged.

Q: Well apparently, the Germans weren't in the abbey until after the bombing. Then they went in the abbey, and ruins make a better protection than...

MAK: But that failed, and that's when they split my outfit in two. One half went up to Anzio in the landing there, while we stayed in the Cassino area to participate in what was to be the crossing of the Rapido River.

Q: Okay, now let's talk about the Rapido crossing.

MAK: Our role was to protect the infantry assigned to cross the river.. It was the Texas division. Our role was to move up during the night and establish our guns close to the bank of the river and be prepared to add to the firepower of the infantry which would be attempting to cross the river in their rubber boats. The weather was terrible. The rain poured, and the mud was a real obstacle in moving our half tracks into position. There is no such thing as moving a half track quietly. So, it was no surprise that the Germans knew what we were up to. Our infantry began their crossing after am extended barrage laid down by our field artillery. The river was turbulent from the rain, making a crossing all but impossible. Some of our infantry made it across in rubber craft, only to be captured by the Germans. Others drowned or were shot while crossing. While all this was going on, we had no idea what was happening. No one had thought to keep us informed. When it became apparent that the crossing had failed, the infantry and their headquarters withdrew from the area but failed to inform us. At daybreak we began looking for our troops and tried to contact our headquarters. We learned that we had been left sitting near the banks of the river.

Q: What was your unit doing?

MAK: We were there to protect the infantry if the Germans came across the river. That's basically what we were to do. But we were not to participate in the infantry battle itself. I don't think we were there in an anti-aircraft capacity, because we were in a densely wooded area.

Q: Part of your unit went to Anzio. What happened to you? Did you eventually go to Anzio?

MAK: Yes. After that failure, we were shipped up to Anzio on LSTs (Landing Ship, Tanks) from the Naples area. From the port of Anzio we were sent on up to join a field artillery unit. I don't remember precisely where it was on Anzio or what unit it was. It could not been far from the port as nothing is far, the beachhead being very small.

There we joined the field artillery. We moved into dugouts which had already been dug by former “occupants”. Incidentally, Anzio was not a place where we had ordinary foxholes. These were covered foxholes that were completely underground. Another officer and I were sharing this quite large foxhole. We had just gone to bed when suddenly all hell broke loose. The boom, boom, boom and crash, crash, crash was deafening, and the earth literally shook. Certainly, we are being bombed and shelled to death. We both tried madly to hug the ground trying to keep as little exposed as possible. I don't remember how long that went on, but it seemed like most of the night. When it did stop and we were brave enough to set foot outside, we learned that we were camped right in the midst of our field artillery, and it was their shells that were going out were shaking us. At the same time the Germans were lobbing shells into the area. There may have been bombings going on at the same time. We never knew. So, all of that was not nearly as dangerous as it sounded. But it sounded like something was tearing the world apart. That was our introduction to Anzio, and it never really got much better.

Q: Prior to going to Anzio, had your unit suffered many casualties?

MAK: Up to Anzio we had suffered very few casualties. They came at Anzio and after.

Q: At Anzio, were you giving anti-aircraft support?

MAK: Yes. We were a part of the general anti-aircraft defense which covered the entire Anzio beachhead. We were a small part of a huge anti-aircraft defense unit, which covered all of the various segments of the area. This included long heavy anti-aircraft units and light anti-aircraft units. Every inch of the beachhead was covered by heavy and light weapons.

For anti-aircraft defense purposes, the beachhead was divided into four sectors - red sector; blue sector; yellow sector and green sector. All of the many gun batteries were tuned into the same radio channel so that all units were included in the overall air defense pattern. Our guns were, as I recall, in the green sector.

This is roughly how the system operated. All radios were tuned to the anti-aircraft channel day and night. As central radar detected enemy aircraft approaching the beachhead and entering, say, the red sector, the headquarters unit would broadcast, “three enemy aircraft entering red sector - red sector, fire, fire”. At that signal all of the anti-aircraft guns in red sector would send up a curtain of anti-ant-aircraft fire. As the enemy aircraft passed into another sector, they would be followed by other sector barrages as they moved through the beachhead. The aircraft were tracked individually from sector to sector. If enemy aircraft were present in all sectors, the order “general barrage, general barrage; fire, fire” was give, and a curtain of fire would rise slowly into the sky from every section of the beachhead. Searchlights would be combing the sky, searching for the enemy aircraft and exposing them to targeting heavy guns. The heavy artillery shells would be bursting in the sky, and “window”, could be seen drifting down through the smoke. This “window” was a mass of small strips of what looked like tinfoil dropped by the enemy aircraft and designed to confuse the Allied radar. Adding to the drama was the glow of exploding ammunition dumps located throughout the beachhead and particular targets for enemy aircraft and artillery.

These nighttime barrages were spine chilling; awe-inspiring spectacles. The primary danger to us was from possible enemy artillery and falling shrapnel from the anti-aircraft shells. We were not a profitable target for enemy aircraft.

Q: Well, the beachhead was supposed to be the beginning of an offensive. What was it like by the time you got there?

MAK: It was stalemate. The Germans were dug in, and we were dug in. They had the advantage of being in the Alban hills overlooking the beachhead; so they could see pretty much everything we did. And we knew that, so we had to be careful. And, of course, they knew that we knew. That was pretty much the situation throughout the Italian campaign. The Germans were in the heights in a defensive position, and we were in the lower areas in the offensive position. We seemed to be going uphill all the time.

Q: Your unit was anti-aircraft. Were there many attacks by German planes?

MAK: Oh yes, nearly every day. I don't quite remember if they were every night, but I remember the air raids at night were one of the most awe-inspiring things that I've ever seen.

Q: Let's talk about “butterfly bombs.”

MAK: Yeah, they actually weren't called “butterfly bombs,” I forgot what they're called, but at night the Germans would send down masses of these little tiny anti-personnel explosives that would float down and explode on or close to the ground, sending bits of fragments flying in all directions. Sometimes little gadgets such as pens or knives were attached. They would explode when picked up.

Q: You mentioned something about your Chaplain. What was that?

MAK: That is about Father Kenney, our unit's Catholic Chaplain. He and I shared one of these covered dugouts. It was a marvelous dugout and was connected by a tunnel to the dugout of our medical officer, who was a great friend of ours. When we had one of usual night raids and the earth would be shaking, we would go through the tunnel to Doc's dugout, where we would help him get rid of some orange juice, laced with a bit of his medical alcohol.

But that is not what I want to say about Father Kenney. One evening, when we decided to go over to First Armored Division headquarters where, for the first time, a movie was to be shown.. This was a rare occasion, and we were eager to take it in. The movie was to be shown in the mess hall, which was hidden in a growth of pine trees and presumably well concealed. By the time we got to the building all the seats were taken, which meant that we would have to stand in the back and watch. I didn't want to do that; so I went back to my dugout. Shortly after I left, the Germans directed a barrage of artillery directly onto the building, and Father Kenney was among the many killed.

Q: How did you find it that you and others were reacting, because this was very much sort of a World War I experience...

MAK: In situations like this, it is the infantry in the front lines that suffers the most. We who were back from the immediate front were in danger, of course, but nothing compared to the men at the front. They were the ones who really suffered. Our situation was uncomfortable, but theirs was hell.

Q: Well, nobody was very far from the front.

MAK: No, everyone was basically on the front, but some were more vulnerable than others. We could move around a bit, but they could not. We were not facing the enemy directly.

Q: As time went on, were you getting ready for breakout? The thought must have been at some point, the line around Casino would break, and when that broke...

MAK: When you're in a situation like that, you just don't have much thinking. We just took one day at a time. The days become a succession of dull sameness, neither good nor bad. There was not a lot of joking going on. Eventually, there cam a time when we were alerted to the scheduling of an “all out” attempt at a breakthrough.. There had been a lot of attempted breakthrough before where our infantry had suffered terribly, so we tried to control our hopes.

However, the day did come, and we were instructed to prepare to move out on a certain hour. We packed up all our equipment and early in the morning took off on our way out of the beachhead. The breakthrough was preceded, of course, by heavy artillery bombardment, which, of course, drew heavy response from the Germans. While our infantry had to fight a tough battle to dislodge the Germans, they succeeded, while suffering many casualties. We in the following rear had a comparatively easy time of it.

Q: Did you get to Rome?

MAK: We were attached to the First Armored Division, so we moved with them up the road to Rome, which was strewn with German bodies and smelled horribly. After we had passed through that area the way into Rome was delightful and blessedly peaceful. I rode in a First Armored jeep with one of the intelligence officers, and it was a very fine, uneventful trip into Rome. Our unit spent perhaps a week there, and then moved on out of the city.

Q: You mentioned that you were joining the 473rd regimental combat team.

MAK: By the time we left Anzio, the German air force had largely been diverted to Europe, so there was less need for anti-aircraft. So, they took three anti-aircraft battalions, including ours and created the 473rd Regimental Combat Team. We were then

reequipped for infantry, which meant we got rifles and BARs instead of half-tracks and anti-aircraft artillery; so we were foot soldiers from then on. We were sent to Montecatini Terme, a beautiful resort and spa, where we were reequipped as infantry and began training, which including lots of hiking and some rifle practice. From there, as I recall, we moved into the Pisa area. In that sector, the Arno River was the front line, and it remained so for some length of time.

As I recall, our first assignment was to secure the South bank of the Arno directly opposite the city of Pisa. The front was static, with little activity on either side. We sat for some time, directly across from Pisa, quietly occupying the South bank and watching the German troops on the opposite bank. We had a direct view of the famous Tower of Pisa and could, from time to time, spot German soldiers going about their business and watching us. It was an odd sort of situation.

Then we were sent over along the river to the west of Florence, doing much the same thing we were doing opposite Pisa. We were fairly comfortable there, both we and the Germans making no aggressive movements. We did have to be particularly watchful at night, for that is when we might expect some enemy patrol activity. It was in that area that we became acquainted with the German “burp” gun, as we called it. That gun was an automatic weapon that was fired in rapid spurts. We could see the fire of the bullets and hear the “burp”. We suspected that the soldiers were nervous and were fining at any unfamiliar sound, including the movement of animals. That was also the place where a group of Red Cross girls visited us, bringing cookies. We were very grateful for such attention, and we appreciated very much their coming up to the front lines. Nothing much happened there, and we were subsequently pulled out after our troops had crossed the Arno in another sector.

One interesting thing I remember, in crossing one of the rivers with no bridge, our vehicles were made amphibious by sealing some parts and relocating the exhaust. We did a lot of

practice river crossings during the Italian campaign. I'm afraid that I get the names of the rivers mixed up. There seemed to be so many of them to cross.

After that we were assigned to an area north of Florence, in what I believe was the Serchio River valley. Our regiment was strung out along that quiet valley. My battalion was based in a pretty area, with wonderful views of the surrounding mountains. This was winter-time with lots of snow and could try out our skis and snow shoes. The Germans to our north also had plenty of snow, and we could see them skiing in the area of Abatone, a ski resort to the northwest of us. We spent a month or so in that lovely valley during which time our chief duty as to maintain contact with allied units on our flanks. That involved periodic patrols up the mountain into the snow clad area, meeting patrols of our British neighbors to the East and our Tenth Mountain on the West. While the patrols were tough going, they were without incident, and we felt lucky to be in such a quiet area. We called it our “Happy Valley”.

We were finally pulled out of there and sent over to the West coast in the area of Forte di Marmi and Viareggio. There we sat for some time, waiting for further assignment. It was in that area that we experienced the German “Big Bertha-like” gun. This artillery piece fired an enormous shell, which seemed to hurtle through the air like a box car. We could hear it being fired from way up the coast, then hear it hurtling though the air and finally landing with an enormous thump, leaving a hole as big as a house. By the time we heard the gun being fired, the shell, of course had already landed. This thing could scare the dickens out of you. When we heard the initial firing, we got as far away as we could; though by that time, of course, it was too late. We learned later that the gun was housed in a tunnel near the city of La Spezia and wheeled out to be fired.

Q: Was the Italian population just staying away from everybody?

MAK: Well when we were in Happy Valley, we were very much in touch with the Italians. They were very receptive, very nice. We would go on patrols in the area, and they

would invite us in and give us a breakfast of bread and eggs fried in olive oil and bread. Incidentally, as they had little or no wheat flour, they made the bread with chestnut flour. For the rest of the time, the Italians went about their daily routine of trying to cope with their miserable life, coping with their damaged homes and a shortage of just about everything. I would say they were mostly in a state of shock.

Q: Did you by this time have a feeling that you were in a secondary field and the real action was taking place along the French-German border?

MAK: We never gave it much thought. We were too occupied with our own situation to think much about anything else.

Q: This was your war?

MAK: Yes, we never thought about it. Intellectually we knew what was going on in the rest of Europe. There in Italy, the Germans were digging in and were putting up strong resistance all along the line.

Q: How did you find being an infantryman?

MAK: I never gave much thought as to how I felt. When you are with a unit which is going in and out of combat, you simply cannot allow yourself to think too much about whether or not you are frightened. Being in direct combat is being very, very tensed up. It is always scary, but you simply do not allow yourself to think of anything but what you are doing. Most of all, you make certain that you do not appear frightened. You know that everyone around you is going through the same danger. I think you sort of turn off your emotions at such times.

While you are attacking or defending, there is a vast amount of noise. There's a lot of fire going around you. I found that when I was on the aggressive, going on patrol, seeking out the enemy, or really being active, I didn't feel particularly frightened. It was tense, but

not frightening. You're more in control of things, and you could watch out for the danger. When you are being attacked by aircraft or artillery or hand guns, you are entirely on the defensive and have little control in the situation.

I also should emphasize that most of the time during my two and half years in combat areas was spent in waiting or moving from place to place. Periods of actual combat were intermittent and brief. There were periods when one could relax completely. And there were times, such as at Anzio and in the Cassino and Rapido River operations, when one was pretty constantly on the alert.

Q: You mentioned Colonel Phalen.

MAK: Oh yes. This was the worst thing that ever I experienced during my days in the Army. Colonel Phalen was the new commander of our battalion and had only recently joined us. This was in the area just to the north of Carrara. He was leading group of some twenty or so men up the side of a mountain with the goal of driving off or capturing the German unit which was holding the crest of the mountain and holding up our advance to the north. I as his intelligence officer was accompanying him. Our attack was successful, and the German unit surrendered rather quickly. The problem was then getting them down off the mountain and in the hands of our troops below.

There was a small chapel not far down from the crest of the mountain. This would be a good place to assemble the captives and prepare them for the trip down the mountain. We assembled the captives and were preparing them for the descent when suddenly the world came crashing in. I felt suddenly that I had been struck by a bolt of lightning. When I finally came to my senses, I saw, though the smoke and debris, that everyone in the room had been knocked to the ground, including Colonel Whalen and the young soldier beside me. As far as I could see, I was the only person in the group of about fifty US and German soldiers left standing. Looking up at the ceiling, I realized that a mortar shell had crashed though the roof, killing or wounding everyone in sight - except me.

All around me were soldiers, American and German, screaming or moaning or just lying there. Colonel Phalen and the young solder, both of whom had been at my side, were dead. The floor of the chapel was flowing in deep red, thick blood. Slowly a handful of our men staggered to their feet and began to come to life. I ordered those who could walk to get down to headquarters as quickly as they could to order the medics and stretcher bearers up the mountain. We were able to make radio contact with the Command Post and apprised them of the situation.

Meanwhile, I sought medical kits on the bodies of the dead and injured and began bandaging wounds, applying what medicines I found and injected morphine into those who seemed to be in the most pain. Meanwhile, stretcher-bearers arrived and began evacuating the wounded, leaving the dead for later. As it slowly began to get dark, I began to realize that I was the only person left in the chapel who was not either dead or dying. I searched around to see what I might do for the poor men left, and, being out of medicine and morphine, I decided there was nothing further I could do for them.

By that time it was completely dark. I grabbed a flashlight from somewhere and dashed out the door and stumbled my way down the mountain to our command post and dropped onto my bedroll and bust into tears. I just lay there and bawled. No one spoke a word and neither did I. I have never even partially forgotten that horrible few hours of streaming blood and dead and dying men.

Q: You said you were wounded at one point?

MAK: It was in that area that our command post was mortared, and I was hit by a fragment.

Q: You mentioned Massa.

MAK: Yes, from Carrara on, it was bad, fighting our way through one little town after another. The Germans were well dug in everywhere and were putting up a fiery defense.

As we advanced, the German artillery pounded us, though there was no air activity. Most of our advancing was done in the night hours, making the whole scene more nerve wracking than dangerous. . We'd proceed mostly at night, which would make it a little scarier, the flares and bursting artillery adding to the tension. I recall that taking the t own of Massa was about the worst, though now I cannot for the life of me remember why it was worse than the others. We lost quite a few men on the way to Genoa.

Q: What about the partisans?

MAK: We only got to them when we finally arrive at Genoa. It was the Partisans who took Genoa, opening the way for us to march victoriously into the city. They took it and they knew it and intended to keep it in their hands. This caused a certain conflict, as our battalion was officially put in charge of the city, including the busy port. I was given the impressive title of Port Manager, knowing absolutely nothing about managing a port. That didn't really matter, as the partisans were not about to give it up to us. Fortunately, for me, I received orders transferring me back to the US before I had to deal with the port problem.

I didn't mention to you that I had been awarded the Bronze Star medal as well as a Purple Heart. I got my Purple Heart for an injury from a mortar shell fragment. The Bronze Star was for a patrol I led into enemy territory north of Pisa and for my handling of the massacre at the chapel in the Carrara area.

Q: About this time, you were slated to leave to go back to the States? When was that?

MAK: I just don't remember any dates.. I know that after leaving Genoa I waited several weeks in Naples for the SS Washington (I think) to take me to the States. Then I was perhaps two weeks at a Rest and Rehabilitation Center at Hot Springs, Arkansas before being sent to Fort Bliss, Texas for eventual shipment to the Pacific.

While at Fort Bliss, we dropped the atom bomb, essentially ending the war, and I went home.

Q: Where did you go? What was home?

MAK: I had entered from Chicago; but when I was being discharged I chose to be discharged to Iowa rather Illinois. Anyway, I returned to Waterloo. My father, who had been in the US Air Force had been discharged and had returned home, and my mother, who had, while we were gone, taken a job with the YWCA in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, had also returned home.

I had been in the Army over four and one half years, and had spent two and one half of those years in North Africa and Italy. After such a length of time, I felt quite a stranger coming home to Waterloo, Iowa.

Q: How did you happen to join the Foreign Service?

MAK: How I got into the Foreign Service was rather interesting.. When I was on leave from Fort Bliss, I saw in the post office a poster inviting military personnel to take the Foreign Service exam for service abroad. This intrigued me. Military people were going to be given an abbreviated exam for the job of FSO, and we had to apply through our commanding officers to take an exam.

I applied, but my commanding officer was on leave and never forwarded my application; so I didn't get my application in on time. Meanwhile I was discharged from the Army, and I was determined that I was going to become a Foreign Service Officer. I must say that before the war, during my college days, I had scarcely heard of a Foreign Service Officer, and it certainly never entered my head to become one. But my service in North Africa and Italy sparked my interest in foreign lands, and I was determined then to become an FSO.

I was too late to take the exam, so I thought, “Well, the next thing to do is to study foreign affairs.” So I applied for SAIS, which had just been established here in Washington.

Q: Would you spell that out?

MAK: School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), which is now part of Johns Hopkins here in Washington. It wasn't then; it was independent. But there again I applied too late. Meanwhile, I worked in my father's brokerage business in Waterloo Iowa.

I thought, “Well, I've got to hurry this thing up,” so I decided to go to Washington and perhaps attend George Washington University under the G.I. Bill of Rights and study things that might help me in the foreign service. And I also thought it a good idea to touch base with my congressman, who had beaten my father out for Congress some years back and had been a classmate of his at the University of Iowa. Both he and his wife were classmates of my mother and father at the University and good friends.

So I went to call on him, and he invited me to lunch. I told him what I was planning to do, and he said, “Well, I have a good friend who's in the Foreign Service.” He brought along this friend to the lunch. The upshot was that the friend said, “Oh, I know that they're recruiting now for temporary officers to serve in Germany; would you be interested in that?”

I said, “Sure.” So I went in and saw Findley Burns, whom I later got to know very well. Findley interviewed me and said, “Well, I'll let you hear in due time.”

So I went back to Waterloo and worked with my father.. I didn't hear from Washington, so I thought, “Well, I better go in and find out.” So I got on the train, went to Washington, called on Findley. He said, “Oh, did you get my letter?”

And I said, “No.”

He said, “Well, we offered you a commission.”

And I said, “Well, the trains must have crossed, because it hadn't arrived when I left.”

Anyway, he said, “Fill out the application forms etc., and report here for your consular training.” I guess it was early March.

Q: This is of—

MAK: 1946. So I did so, and I reported and was given a reserve commission as vice consul to go to Hamburg, which was in the British zone of occupied Germany. So I was sent off to Hamburg as vice consul, along with a number of other ex-Army people and Consul David McKillop. There were Frank Galbraith, Fred Armstrong, Bill Kelly and Bill O'Donnell. We all served in Hamburg under Consul General Edward Groth and became known as “Groth's Boys” there in Hamburg.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

MAK: Hamburg had been an important consulate before the war, and we were reopening the consulate, so from the very beginning we had to go through step one. I was appointed administrative officer. Another was put in charge of the visa section, another in charge of passports, another in charge of general consular affairs, etc. As I knew nothing about consular financial or administrative matters, I was sent to our Consulate in Berlin to learn how to set up the financial accounts at Consulate General Hamburg.

In Berlin I got all the proper forms and learned how to pay people, and how to keep the accounts etc. The job made easy by the presence of many of the pre-war staff who'd been doing the same thing, managing our accounts, before the war at the consulate, and subsequently with the Swiss, who handled our interests in Germany during the war. All I really had to do was provide a slight bit of guidance to Erna Kasparek, a local employee who then raced ahead and did everything beautifully.

Q: Hamburg was practically destroyed during the war, wasn't it? Did we have any building? What was our situation?

MAK: It was a strange situation. Hamburg was fire bombed, I think over a hundred thousand people had been killed and a large portion of the city was bombed flat. The port, or course, was destroyed. But strangely enough, the nicer parts of Hamburg, including parts of the city's center, around the Alster River, were left pretty much intact. Even the main railroad station, although it had lost some of its glass canopy, was basically intact and functioning. In the center of the city you could walk through areas that were untouched. However, a large section of the city, was completely destroyed in the bombings. This area, which was called the “dead city”, had been largely occupied by lower paid workers. Huge multi-storied concrete bomb shelters, accommodating hundreds of people, were located throughout central Hamburg.

Q: What was the attitude of the Germans? I mean, here we'd just gone through a war and you talk about 100,000 people lost in Hamburg. What was the attitude towards the Americans, I mean, towards you all there?

MAK: It seemed to me that the Germans were basically lethargic. They were almost starving. They had little food. I can remember seeing mounds and mounds of cabbages, but little else on the way of food. That seemed to be about all they had to eat. There was practically nothing to buy in the shops, and rationing was strict.

They tended to move around doing their business, but lethargically. They were really almost refugees in their own country. We in the Consulate were just a handful and were treated largely with indifference. The British army was the occupying force, which did give us Americans a rather special position. .The German public did always managed to show a certain amount of deference. It wasn't unpleasant and it wasn't exactly sullen. It was simply lethargic.

They were friendly to us. They weren't aggressively friendly, but if you talked to them, they were polite. There was not much basis for friendship so soon after the war. I did manage to make some friends there and consequently had a fairly active social life. As an

American official, I automatically was accepted by some particularly interesting German families. These included the Otto Bismarks, the Casimir Wittgensteins and the Peter Alsens. They never “used” me in any way, and I was comfortable in our relationship.

Q: What was our consulate doing in Hamburg in those days?

MAK: Basically we were re-opening the Consulate General. There was very little that we could do. We did make trips throughout the district and report on the agriculture situation. There wasn't much to report on industrial activity, because that was very tightly controlled by the British and the tripartite groups. There were American expatriates, particularly American-born wives of Germans, who wanted to renew their US citizenship and return to the States.

Q: Also, there was a law at the time where they'd lost their citizenship by marrying a foreigner, too. Wasn't that still in effect or not?

MAK: Well, actually, they could get it back if they had not made an overt act, such as, renouncing their American citizenship, voting in the German election or taking an oath in the German Army. So I know that we expatriated a number of American-born women who wanted to return to the U.S. but had voted in the first German elections after the war, and by so doing, lost their American citizenship.

Q: How were your relations with the British? You were a small group there, and was this a difficult relationship or a good one?

MAK: It was a very easy relationship. They were very good to us. We were a very small group, as you know. We didn't cause them any trouble. All we wanted from them was a place to live and a place for our office and some work permits for the people that we needed to work for us. They also provided us with food and liquor on a rationed basis, though, fortunately, we could obtain our food from the Army commissary in Bremerhaven. Socially they were friendly, and officially they were helpful. I presume that there was a bit

of reciprocity involved since they were living under our people in the American zone. No, they couldn't have treated us better.

Q: Moving on to really the focus of your career was Arabic. You left Hamburg in 1948. How did you get into Arabic?

MAK: While I was in Hamburg, a notice came out announcing that the Department was going to set up a school for Arabic language studies, and they were seeking volunteers to apply for this course. As I said earlier, I was intrigued by North Africa and found it fascinating. The whole culture, which I didn't go deeply into, mind you, I found of great interest. So I thought, “This sounds like a very interesting thing to do,” so I applied for Arabic language training and got it.

So after two years in Hamburg, I was sent to Washington to start in the first Arabic language study class at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington. A preliminary course had been held in Beirut under Dr. Charles Ferguson, who was the professor in charge of the program and who was formulating the program pretty much as we went along. We were generally just one lesson behind him.

There were six of us in the program: Carl Walstrom, David Gammon, David Fritzlan, Harlan Clark, Rodger Davies, and I. We were the first group there. It was tough. The course was only six months long, but we ended up with a pretty good basic knowledge of Syrian-Lebanese Arabic. This would be considered inadequate by today's standards of the Foreign Service Institute, but we had a good basis, I was then sent to Saudi Arabia.

Q: And this is 1948. You went first to Dhahran.

MAK: That's right.

Q: A post where ten years later I served in Dhahran in 1958.

MAK: Dhahran in those days was a little Levitt-type town plunked in the desert with hardly anything growing. It was a miserable place; nothing but sand and sandstorms.

Q: Well, you were there just really a very short time.

MAK: Yes. A Foreign Service inspector came out and observed that Dhahran was not a suitable post for a budding Arabist.

Q: Described as being equivalent to being stationed in Tulsa.

MAK: That's right, yes, except not as pretty. Yes, it was really pretty hopeless.

Q: We're talking because of the American oil camp and all, which dominated the area. There wasn't really much of an Arab community there.

MAK: No, there wasn't. There were few occasions to meet any local Arabs and try out one's basic Arabic. Your daily contacts were either employees of Aramco or offices at the US Air facility at Dhahran airport.

Q: You were then transferred to Jeddah, weren't you?

MAK: Yes. I was only at Dhahran a couple of months.

Q: The ambassador there was Rives Childs?

MAK: J. Rives Childs, yes.

Q: What was he like to work with?

MAK: Well, Childs was a jolly fellow. He was very bright and very much down to earth. He let you pretty much do your own things. He did set the guidelines on the reporting that he wanted, but he let you do it. He gave you really full rein. He was very pleasant and he

knew how to get along with the Arabs. Furthermore, he knew how to get along with us in this difficult environment. I liked him very much.

Q: What were you doing?

MAK: First of all, I was made administrative officer. Mind you, at this time I'd taken and passed the Foreign Service exam in Hamburg, failed the orals, taken the written again, this time passed the orals and was waiting for my appointment as FSO. But the Department didn't have the funds to make all of us Foreign Service Officers, so I was sent out to Dhahran as a staff officer.

Q: This is a Foreign Service staff officer.

MAK: Yes, that's right. I was first sent to Dhahran and then transferred to Jeddah, where I was made administrative officer. I did that for a while, and then I was made economic officer. There wasn't a lot of reporting to do. It really turned out to be primarily following up on trade opportunities. Those, strangely enough, turned out to be largely business contacts between Jewish companies in the U.S. who wanted to do business with Arab merchants, primarily to ship them used clothing for resale to pilgrims and others in the Jeddah market.

Q: I have to add here that even ten years later, pants weren't used, but old coats. You'd see Army coats of every nation there, and vests were a big item and suit coats.

MAK: Yes. Well, that's exactly it. They never stopped. And those came primarily, in my day anyway, from Jewish merchants in New York.

Q: Well, you were there in '48, '49, during the formation of Israel. Here you were one of the first group of Arabists and all. What was the attitude of the embassy? Here you were in a country which was just livid because of the creation of Israel. What was the situation

as you saw it and the people around you at the embassy saw this recognition of Israel, creation of Israel, and all that?

MAK: Well, that was interesting. There had been a Saudi contingent to help fight the Israelis, or the Jews, and had just returned. They returned very, very quietly and were encamped in what they call the gishla or barracks near the town wall and near where our embassy was at the time.

There appeared to be almost no discernible reaction on the part of the local populace. The loss of the war did not seem to be a problem to them and they did not seem to be particularly concerned about it. They looked more to their immediate interests, which was trade.

Q: This is the Hejaz, which is the, I guess we'd call the western part.

MAK: Right. The Hejazis considered themselves to be sophisticated, where as those out in the Nejd where the Saudis came from—or where the Saud family came from— were considered to be desert, bedouin warriors of a different culture. The people in Jeddah were largely merchants, and they were interested primarily in making money off the Hajj and controlling business in Jeddah and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Q: The Hajj being the pilgrimage, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca.

MAK: Their society was built on servicing the pilgrimages, that and playing merchant. They really were not interested on what went on up north, and they were particularly not happy with Egypt and what was going on in Egypt at the time. The Palestine problem did not seem to be of major concern, at least as far as we could determine.

Q: Were the Saudi rulers trying to stir up the populace to turn this into a jihad or not?

MAK: No. Now, here you're pushing me a little really beyond my knowledge. Our Ambassador Rives Childs, or Hermann Eilts and Bill Brewer, who were in the political

section at the time, would have had a better understanding of this than I, but my impression was that the Saudis were interested primarily in, getting the oil going in the eastern province—solving their production problems with ARAMCO. They were more concerned about distrust of the Hashemites, the rulers of Jordan, their relations with Syria and their dislike of Egypt and the revolutionary forces in control there than anything else. They were looking more for solidifying their own power in their own country than they were getting involved in regional affairs.

Q: Moving really from the Saudis and all, let's look—because I think this is important because there's an impression that an Arabist per se as—I'm speaking of an American Foreign Service person concentrating on the Arabic world—is opposed to Israel. How did you feel? I mean, this thing happened, this creation of Israel. You and the men who were also becoming Arabists in an Arab capital, how did you feel about this at the time? What was sort of the table conversation about developments there?

MAK: Do you mean conversations between us and the local people?

Q: No. Between you and Hermann Eilts and Bill Brewer and the ambassador and all that.

MAK: I see. Well, we had all been imbued, associating with Arabs in our studies and so forth, with an understanding of the Arab point of view. As such, we felt that their point of view had been neglected almost completely for political reasons and emotional reasons, having to do with World War II and our American general attitude..

Q: You're speaking in the United States?

MAK: In the United States, yes. We felt that the Palestinians had been done in by everybody concerned. We understood the reasons for it and could sympathize with it. Anyone who had been in Germany after the war could sympathize with the plight of the Jews, particularly if you'd been in Hamburg. They tried to run ships from Hamburg to

Palestine and some of them were sent back. A lot of them were lost. But basically our attitude was pro-Arab. There's no question about that.

Q: Looking back on it, do you feel that maybe you were overcompensating for the fact that there was an almost dearth of input as far as what the other side of the political clash over Israel was?

MAK: I don't know whether this is answering your question or not, but in hindsight, I think that we were oversold on the Arab point of view. I'm not saying that I think the Arab point of view is wrong, because for an Arab, it's absolutely right. But for a Jew, on the other hand, his side is absolutely right. I wasn't an Arab or a Jew; I was a State Department officer. And I think it behooves us to follow the policies and act on the policies as established by the government we are representing.

And I think that's a lesson to be remembered. It's so easy to live in the Arab world and become more Arab than the Arabs, or live in Austria and become more Austrian, or Holland, more Dutch. It is a disease that is easy to catch in the Foreign Service, or in any other endeavor where you're living with foreign people. You're going to adopt their attitudes toward basic issues.

Incidentally, while on vacation in Italy in 1949, I met my future wife, who, like I was traveling on vacation. We met on a tourist bus and ended up touring up and down Italy together. We married in 1951 in Virginia.

NOTE: See the ADDENDUM on Saudi Arabia which follows at the end of this Oral History.

Q: You left Jeddah in 1950 and went to language training at the University of Pennsylvania?

MAK: The University of Pennsylvania. It was primarily Arab, or rather regional, studies. I did take Arabic, written Arabic, but in one year, you're not going to learn much written

Arabic. I studied and improved my Arabic, but it was mainly regional studies, both at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate learning in Philadelphia, which is obviously a Jewish college and of considerable stature. They gave some very good courses which they let us attend free. Hermann Eilts and I were there at the same time.

Q: On coming back, you went to Washington, where you were assigned to the Libyan—no, you went to Tripoli?

MAK: I went to Libya first, yes.

Q: Where you served from 1951 to '54?

MAK: Right The most important event in our tour in Libya was the birth of our Daughter Helen (Holly). She was born at the military hospital at nearby Wheelus Field.We were living in one half of a small house in the area called Garden City, not far from the city center. The Legation was located on the second floor of a building on Cathedral Square. The caf# Bonbonieri occupied the ground floor. Horse drawn “garries” or taxis were stationed just below our windows.

Q: What were you doing in Tripoli? This was a normal assignment, I assume.

MAK: Yes. I was an FSO, and I was sent there as economic officer. There wasn't a lot to do. Libya became independent-I think it was Christmas Day—1951.

Economic reporting consisted primarily of reporting on such things as the tuna industry, esparto grass and the reconstruction of their little railroad. There was also a bit about the restoration of the Italian farms in the hinterland, but not much else. Shortly afterwards, I became political officer.

There we had as our main job the renegotiation of the Wheelus Air Base Agreement near Tripoli. Libya had two things on its mind at that time. One was establishing itself as a

constitutional monarchy, which involved establishing a parliament, conducting elections in the various provinces (there were three provinces of Libya) deciding where the king was going to make his capital (King Idris was chosen by sort of unanimous acclaim) where he was going to live, which was going to be the predominant province: was it going to be Cyrenaica or was it going to be Tripolitania?; and, of course, how much the Americans and the British were going to contribute to the budget of the new Libyan nation. As the British were pretty threadbare after the war, it was up to the Americans then, to provide funds for the Libyans, and that amount would have to be negotiated.

At that time, the US had a large Aid (Point IV) program in Libya devoted to infrastructure and agriculture development. This swelled the American official community considerably.

Also while we were there a conference of United Nations representatives was taking place. They were helping the Libyans draft a constitution, which they had many difficult problems to solve, including where the nation's capital was to be and how the government was to be structured. When all was completed and agreed upon, Libya was declared independent.

Q: Of course, we're speaking of a time when oil was just not there.

MAK: No. There wasn't anything there, really. Esparto grass was their main export.Oddly, truffles were also an export, though a relatively minor one.

Q: Esparto grass?

MAK: Esparto grass is a grass, or reed that grows wild there. It's good for making bank notes. It was sold to the United States, Britain, and other places, primarily to make bank notes.

The British had been occupying the two provinces, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and the French were occupying and administering the Fezzan, the southern part. All three left troops there. Our job was to negotiate an Agreement with the Libyans for the use

of Wheelus Field Air Base, once the British had relinquished control to the Libyan government when formed..

My job was to clear away the underbrush in the negotiations. I would meet with Suleiman Jerbi at the Libyan Foreign Office. I would have a draft of the agreement that Washington wanted, and Suleiman would have a draft of the agreement that Libya wanted.

Q: Suleiman Jerbi was—

MAK: He was the head of the Foreign Office there. He wasn't Minister of Foreign Affairs, but rather a sort of Director General. He was later Ambassador here, and he became a very good friend.

But Suleiman and I would sit together at the Foreign Office and would go through the draft agreements line by line and knock out the portions that we agreed on, those that needed no more negotiation. We then would be left with those that were causing problems. We then would discuss these sections at our embassy and he with his people, and then we would meet again and try to come to some agreed language. Well, that was pretty easy, because there were only two sticking points really in the whole agreement. One was status of forces, and the other was payment.

Q: Which means whether Libya had jurisdiction over American soldiers if they got in trouble or not.

MAK: Exactly. And the other was how much we'd give them in exchange for this agreement, and that had to be decided in Washington. State and Defense sent lawyers out to assist and advise. Eventually it was settled that we'd give Libya one million dollars a year, which seemed like a big sum at the time, in exchange for the right to use and expand Wheelus Air Force Base. But the Agreement had hardly been signed when the Libyans thought better of it and negated the whole thing. However, I was soon transferred

to London, so I didn't have anything more to do with it. Eventually the agreement was renegotiated, but that had nothing to do with me.

Q: Libya just did not have importance to us, except for the base?

MAK: I think basically two things. We, one, wanted to maintain our air base; and, two, we didn't want unfriendly foreign powers to have influence there.

Q: Were you concerned about Egypt at the time?

MAK: Egypt was not unfriendly at the time. Nasser was in power, but it was in a sort of honeymoon period in a way. There were problems, but they were not unmanageable problems. The appeal of Nasserism had not yet taken hold in Libya.

Q: Well, you were in London from 1954 to 1956. What was your job there?

MAK: I was political officer. We had a two-man desk in the political section, headed by Evan Wilson, which dealt with the British Foreign Office on Middle East and non-colonial African affairs. We had a myriad of problems at that time. It was an absolutely fascinating time, and I never worked harder in the Foreign Service, ever. It was an almost 24-hour-a-day job, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you were?

MAK: Winthrop Aldrich.

Q: Did he take much interest in what you were doing?

MAK: Oh, he took an interest. Yes. The problems of the Middle East were such that our highest government officials were interested in and were involved in them. While the Ambassador didn't take a daily hand in the situations, he knew everything that was going on and was invariably interested and helpful. He did become involved in our aspect of

our work. That was concerning what was called Project Alpha, a Top Secret project. Alpha was a joint US- British effort to come up with a plan to settle the Arab-Israel conflict. Ambassador Francis Russell was sent from Washington to head up a working group consisting of Evan Wilson and Dayton Mak on the US side and Evelyn Shuckborough and a junior officer on the British side. We worked in the East India room of the Foreign Office trying to come up with a solution to the problem as it stood in 1955.We worked long and hard and came up with little. I do recall that we envisaged the construction of a highway crossover connecting the two separate Arab populated areas. And we proposed an international fund to finance the compensation to Arabs who had lost land to Israel and to provide funds for the resettlement of refugees. We worked in secrecy, and I never understood why it should be so secret.

Q: What were the other concerns that you were dealing with, and how did you go about dealing with these?

MAK: First of all was the British evacuation of the military bases in the Suez Canal Zone. We were purely observers in that operation. Evan and I would visit our contacts at the Foreign Office daily and receive briefings on the status of the British negotiations for the evacuation of the British forces from their Suez Canal zone bases. We could then report this information by telegram to Washington. Of course, others in the Embassy—at higher levels—also reported parallel information from their high level sources, which called for considerable cooperation and coordination among us. It was a time-consuming job but very interesting.

Q: What was sort of our feeling as far as you got? I mean, we were glad they were getting out? We felt it was time and all that?

MAK: Well, yes. We felt there was no alternative. The British, in the first place, couldn't afford it. They couldn't afford financially to continue these bases. They had to withdraw; and they knew it. They would have liked to have stayed if they could have afforded it, but

they couldn't, and we weren't going to contribute to their staying. We didn't see any real reason for them to stay, though we wanted to be sure that the canal was kept open and available to us. I wouldn't say there was no friction between the British and the Egyptians, because there was a lot of friction. The British didn't get all they wanted, but agreement was reached.

Q: For us, we were more or less observers saying, "It's going to happen anyway." What other type of thing did you do?

MAK: Well, then we had the Persian oil agreement. Mossadegh had been ousted and our oil companies were negotiating an agreement with the Persians. The American and the British oil companies were together, and, there again, mine was a time-consuming task. It was a midnight-oil job. The oil companies would get their negotiating instructions through the State Department channels at midnight, and since I lived a block from the embassy, I would be called to deliver the midnight (NIACT) messages to the American negotiators.

Q: Night action telegrams.

MAK: Right. And I would trot over to the embassy in the middle of the night and then trot the messages over to Davies Street, the office of one of the oil companies where the negotiations were being held. This happened night after night. I was a messenger boy. About the same time, the British were involved in the Buraimi oases dispute with Saudi Arabia.

Buraimi is an oasis in the Southern Arabian peninsula between Abu Dhabi and Oman and Saudi Arabia. And it was thought to be a likely site for oil. The Saudis had claims on it. Abu Dhabi and Oman had claims on it. While the British represented these latter groups and pressed their claims. The U.S., on the other hand, because of ARAMCO's interest, was supporting the Saudi claims. As a result there was an ongoing dispute and negotiations between ARAMCO and the British and the British and us. There again, we were merely observing and reporting at the embassy, the negotiations being primarily between the

ARAMCO (representing the Saudi claims) and the British representing the Abu Dhabi and Omani sheikhs.

We had to keep on top of all this, primarily to report to Washington. It was just a reportorial job, but it really brought out a very interesting thing to me; that is, how very sensitive the British were over their protectorates along the Persian or Arabian Gulf and in Southern Arabia.

As a matter of fact one fairly senior officer in the Foreign Office (Ian Samuel), showing his impatience with our attitude toward the Buraimi problem, said, “You know, Dayton, the greatest mistake we have made in this area was to allow you Americans to open a consulate in Kuwait.” I didn't pay much attention to this officer's remark, but it did demonstrate to me the depth of feeling in the British government about our intrusion in their bailiwick, the Persian Gulf and Southern Arabia. That, fortunately, has worked its way out.

Q: When I was there in '58 to '60, it was still very much resented and particularly our ARAMCO's rather progressive attitude toward Saudi Arabia of trying to share; whereas, the British had very much the colonial attitude and kept feeling that ARAMCO was giving away the store to the detriment of the other oil companies there.

MAK: That's a point that I've always kept in mind and mentioned to many, many people—the really intelligent attitude of ARAMCO in dealing with the Saudis. They always dealt with them as partners and never as adversaries, and it made such a vast difference.

Q: Well, I mean, the answer, of course, is ARAMCO is still there, and many of these other ones are not. I mean, ARAMCO is Saudi, but still it is the same central concern, whereas the other ones are not.

MAK: They were very wise. I won't go into all the reasons I think they did it, but anyway, that's another story.

In London, then, our duties were primarily reportorial. This meant visiting the Foreign Office daily discussing the various issues and exchanging information, as appropriate. This had the blessing of the State Department. We would pass on information of mutual interest to them and they would do the same with us, often letting us read their official incoming and outgoing messages. So it worked very well. This made for a very long day. By the time you got back to the embassy and drafted the telegraphic reports, the hour could be pretty late. However, I thought it a lot of fun, and I enjoyed it thoroughly.

The most important event, or series of events, had to do with the Suez Canal takeover by Nasser, and that began just before I was suppose to be transferred back to Washington.

Q: In 1956.

MAK: In late 1956, yes. We were being given a farewell dinner party by the Charg# d'affaires (Andrew Foster) in his home, and we had a number of my contacts from the Foreign Office and other friends there. We were just about to go into dinner—when the head of what they called the Foreign Office African Department was called to the telephone. When he came back he said, “I'm afraid I have to leave. We have just learned that President Nasser has nationalized the Suez Canal Company.” This, we knew, was about the same as a declaration of war.

Well, that ended our farewell dinner party. I had to go back, and the Charg# (our host) had to go back to the embassy to see what the tickers were saying, and report to the Department developments in London and receive instructions as to what we should do. At the same time the Andrea Doria had been rammed, and the ticker was filled with news of both of these events.

Q: Andrea Doria was the Italian ship that was rammed and sunk off of Long Island, so it was a big disaster.

MAK: The British, of course, were outraged by Nasser's move. The French were likewise, as they too had shares in the Suez Canal Company. This meant that, in effect, the Egyptians could do what they wanted with the Suez Canal now that they owned the company that owned operated the canal. So this began long weeks of discussions, reporting and following events as they unfolded.

As you may remember the British and the French were rattling their swords and being very angry about the whole thing. Secretary Dulles wanted to quiet them down, and tried all sorts of measures to get both sides to negotiate. The French and British were adamant, though they reluctantly agreed to discuss ways of bringing the opposing sides together to solve matters peacefully. The British, the French and we met several times in London, the respective delegations being headed by Selwyn Lloyd (British), Pinot (French) and Dulles (U.S.). I served as a minor member of our delegation, primarily as note-taker, drafter of position papers and general “handy-man.” In the end the British and French weren't satisfied with any of this, so they, in collaboration with the Israelis, geared up (not so secretly) their armed forces and set out to attack Egypt.

Q: Had you left at that time?

MAK: No.

Q: You were kept on?

MAK: My transfer was canceled.

Q: Yes. Your leave had been canceled.

MAK: My leave and my transfer had been canceled and I was told to stay on. Meanwhile, we'd packed all of our effects for transfer to Washington. We moved into a furnished apartment in the chancery, and then my wife and daughter went on to Washington to look for a house. I stayed until December, 1956, in fact.

Q: You say you went to these meetings as an observer. I've talked to others, and the accounts are that there was an almost chemical reaction between Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd and John Foster Dulles. They really didn't like each other. Did you sense this, and was this a topic of anything sort of after meetings? Did you get this, or were you too far removed from it?

MAK: My recollection is that there wasn't anyone there who really liked or trusted Foster Dulles. They felt he was a meddler, a “goody-goody,” who just didn't understand the gravity of Nasser's actions.

Q: You mean on the British side?

MAK: On the British side and the French. Of course, no one liked Pinot, the French Foreign Minister either. No one liked what Dulles was trying to do. They didn't think Dulles was doing anything but trying to stall and that he was not looking out for Western interests. He was being helpful to Nasser for his own reasons, or reasons which the British and French didn't share at all, and they didn't just dislike him, they despised him. At least, that was my impression.

Q: Were you getting this at your level of contacts?

MAK: Oh, yes.

Q: The people you were talking to called the working level, what sort of things were you getting? What sort of comments?

MAK: Well, in the first place, to go back just a bit, during the early period we didn't know what the British and French were planning to do, though reports of their naval, movements raised, suspicions back in Washington that they were up to something.. I got wind of this through a top-secret message to the ambassador, which I of course had seen when I

delivered it to him. It asked, in effect, “What are the British up to? They have been acting very strangely here in Washington.” And they asked, “What is going on?”

Armed with that knowledge, I paid particular attention to what people at the desk level, at the Foreign Office, were thinking and saying. They told me that they were puzzled as they were getting nothing from their own people about what the Israelis were doing in Sinai, or even what their own high level planners were thinking with regard to Nasser's nationalization of the canal. The desk level people told me they were in effect being frozen out from the top.

Q: These are the British desks?

MAK: British desk officers, those in what they called 'The third room”.. They told me they were being frozen out, and they didn't understand it; they didn't know what was going on. These were tense times. The newspapers were full of things about British and French army and naval movements, as well as Israeli army movements.

Q: I'm just trying to get a feeling for the attitude at the working level, rather than saying, “I won't comment on this.” Even the British side, they were sort of saying—

MAK: Perplexed.

Q: Perplexed, saying, “Hell, I don't know what's happening.”

MAK: They didn't know. They literally did not know. Then when it was announced that the fleet was en route to Egypt and when the bombs were dropped on the runways and elsewhere in Egypt, several of the desk officers submitted their resignations in disgust.

Q: These are the British desk officers?

MAK: Yes, British desk officers. So there were ambivalent attitudes toward the whole operation, you see.

Q: At the embassy level, was the general feeling that there is something going to happen? What was your speculation and that of the people with whom you were working?

MAK: I'm trying to remember. I don't believe we thought the British would invade. I don't think we thought that they'd go that far, because we had issued very strong warnings against it. Our ambassador had been instructed to go in and tell them, “Look, don't do anything.” That's my recollection. So we thought they probably wouldn't, but they did and, of course, this infuriated Dulles. And it made a lot of people frightened in England.

Q: What happened to your relations with the desk people? You say some resigned. Were you sort of feeling there was almost a revolt within the Foreign Office?

MAK: There was a minor revolt. Yes, there was, at the lower level. Anyway, the U.S., Russia and others pressured the British and the French to withdraw, without defeating Nasser. The bitterness of the British and French towards us, and particularly Dulles, was intense. More conferences were called (by the U.S.) to find ways to clear the canal and ensure its safe and efficient operation to the benefit of all nations. I was made a member of our delegation to these meetings, which were held in Lancaster House Meanwhile, I was stuck in London with my family in Washington—I wanted to join my wife and daughter there. We wanted to get a house, and I'd been assigned as Libya desk officer. I said, “I really want to go home.” So finally the embassy said, “Okay.”

Q: When did you go back?

MAK: That was December.

Q: That was '56. One, you were getting part of this revolt, but were you also getting people who came from the more hard-line British that were giving you a difficult time in your contacts? I mean, “What are you Americans doing? You called us off just before we were ready to take over everything.”

MAK: Well, there was definitely some of that, but I would say the general feeling was that it had been a great mistake.

Q: This is on the British side?

MAK: Yes. And linking up with the Israelis and the French wasn't terribly popular, anyway. It was the wrong war at the wrong time for the wrong reason, I guess.

Q: While this was going on, obviously the focus was there. I was in Frankfurt at the time, and we were saying, "What the hell is all this nonsense?" because we were concerned about the Hungarian revolt at the same time, because we felt this was the real game and this other thing is a sideshow which is diminishing our ability to deal. Did you have the October revolt in Hungary, was that playing any factor in the deliberations that you saw or not or concern?

MAK: I can't answer your question directly. I can say this. I do recall, now that you mention it, that everyone said, "My, God. What an awful time to have a crisis over Suez when something really important is going on." I don't know if you remember that the Russians threatened to rocket London during that period, and I mean people took this seriously. We were nervous. But that didn't happen. The world was not interested in Suez. That was a minor show. It should never have happened.

Q: All right. We'll stop this and pick it up when we can get together again.

MAK: Yes. Another thing; the Department didn't know I was coming home. They were sending a message saying that my transfer was canceled indefinitely.

Before we leave London, let me say some words about Embassy London as a post at that time. England still had some food rationing, but we had the Navy commissary in Grosvenor Square as our major food source. As our house was just one block from the square, we

were in good shape. The theater was up and running, and we took advantage of that and all the other things that London offered.

Ambassador and Mrs. Aldridge entertained a great deal, and they did so with the utmost taste and flair. They gave many receptions and balls, to which they included officers of the Embassy, including the Maks, junior though we were. Our first invitation to a major function was a ball for Princess Alexandra at the Residence at Princes Gate. Then when the Aldriches moved into the former residence of Barbara Hutton in Regents Park, they really entertained royally. Their first functions at the new Residence were receptions, to which we junior officers were invited, primarily to serve as greeters and to mix with the guests. We were also given the opportunity to invite our major contacts in the government to view the new Residence. It was a beautiful experience. It seemed that everyone of any importance in London was invited to one of these “house warming” receptions.

The most impressive and memorable functions were those they gave for members of the Royal Family. By far the most elegant of these was the one honoring Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip. We and several other junior officers were invited to this white tie affair. We were invited to arrive at ten o'clock in the evening, the hour that dancing was to begin. The senior guests, including the members of the Royal family were invited for dinner at eight o'clock, to be followed by dancing. As my wife and I entered the ball room, we surveyed the dance floor and we saw the Queen, Prince Phillip, the Queen Mother, Margot Fonteyn and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. swirling around the dance floor with their partners. Then we saw Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden dressed in their Order of the Garter regalia conversing quietly on the sideline. Princess Margaret, we later found in another room, ensconced in a sofa surrounded by her close friends. We junior officer were asked to sign up to dance with the Queen and the Queen Mother. I recall that Bob Zimmerman's number came up, and he danced with the Queen. Jim Moffett got the Queen Mother, who apparently liked him so much that she kept him dancing and dancing and dancing. Protocol required that one addressed the Queen initially “Your Royal Highness”, and from then on it was “Mam”. One did not initiate conversation, one simply responded. It sounded

like a nerve-wracking ordeal, and I breathed a sigh of relief when the Queen left the room for strawberries and cream in the dining room.

We also had the pleasant experience of attending two receptions at Buckingham Palace. The first was the evening reception for the Diplomatic Corps, which involved presentation to the Queen, followed by a champagne reception, This was followed later in the season by a Garden Party, at which the Queen and other members of the Royal Family strolled through the grounds greeting guests. We never got anywhere close to the Queen. Junior embassy officers were restricted to one such reception per tour.

Our assignment to London was without a doubt the most enjoyable, busiest and interesting of my career in the Foreign Service.

Q: Dayton, you had mentioned something that you thought you'd might mention about when you were in London.

MAK: Yes. It has to do with the various conferences that Secretary Dulles and the foreign ministers of U.K., Selwyn Lloyd and the French foreign minister, were having after Suez Canal debacle. Secretary Dulles was thinking up various schemes to get the canal users to have an association of some kind to operate the canal, and what I'm going to tell you is just an example of the tiny little things that go into making up a conference of this kind and silly little things that go into the making of decisions in that case.

Q: This is just the sort of thing we like to get. It gives a better feel for how things work.

MAK: Well, of course, one reason I'm telling you this is it was my idea, and so I'm patting myself on the back. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. A little toot of the horn never hurts.

MAK: Right. Well, I thought it was awfully funny. But anyway, the three powers were trying to find countries in the Far East whom they could get to join this Suez Canal Users

Association and attend the conferences and try to work out some way of to put control of canal operations in the hands of Allied powers and the other users. They truly believed that Egypt was incapable of operating the canal. They didn't know how to go about choosing countries, say, east of Suez, who could legitimately be asked to join the Users Association; so I was given the task by our people of trying to figure out ways of doing this.

I took a couple of people back to our embassy library, where we looked up the trade figures for the countries east of Suez, including Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Thailand, and others, and got the trade data, their export figures, and noted the destinations of all these shipments. Then we sort of figured, “Now, how much of this would have gone through the Suez Canal to reach the destination west of Suez and how much would have gone the other way or around the horn?” And try to get what percentage of foreign trade of the various countries would normally go through the Suez Canal.

Well, this wasn't all that difficult, really. We didn't have computers to do it, but we had adding machines and, you know, little calculators, and we finally came up with a number of countries who would probably qualify. The only one I really remember is India, and I suppose Pakistan is another one. Maybe Saudi Arabia, I don't recall. But I remember India in particular was invited to participate. Particularly because Krishna Menon turned out to be their representative through all these—

Q: Krishna Menon being the—

MAK: I think he was their foreign minister.

Q: At one point, he was minister of defense, foreign minister. He was anathema to the United States; he was far left.

MAK: He was. He was very anti-everything that we were interested in. But it appeared useful to have India's participation, primarily because of its so-called “neutrality.” Anyway,

these figures and these decisions on who should be invited were then given to Secretary Dulles, the French foreign minister Pinot, and Britain's Selwyn Lloyd.

Incidentally, I particularly remember Krishna Menon at the reception for delegates to the Suez Canal conference given by Prime Minister Anthony Eden at number 10 Downing Street. Menon isolated himself from rest of us invitees, standing alone on a stair landing glowering at the assembled invitees. He truly looked menacing.

Well, back to my little story: Selwyn Lloyd got these figures (he happened to be chairman that day) and he said, “Well, I just want you to know that the entire British government could not come up with any firm indication of what countries should be invited to join the conference on the Canal Users Association, while the American Embassy was able to come up with it in a couple of hours.” [Laughter] Well, of course, I was sitting in my seat and was flattered to death. No one pointed a finger and said, “He did it,” though. Anyway, I was pleased.

Q: Well, now, you left there in—

MAK: December 1956.

Q: And you went to Washington.

MAK: Went to Washington where I was scheduled to become the Libya desk officer, which I became.

Q: How long did you have that job?

MAK: I had that about two years. It was really a pretty uneventful tour. I didn't really feel that it was a very good use of my time or what few talents I had, and so I sort of angled to get out of it. What I succeeded in doing was made staff assistant to the assistant secretary for the Near East Bureau. It had been Near East and African Affairs. They divided that, made it a separate bureau out of African affairs—the African part—and another bureau

out of the Near Eastern-South Asian part, and I was asked to be staff assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Near East-South Asia part.

Q: William Rountree?

MAK: Who at that point was William Rountree, right.

Q: First, before we move to that, you were on the Libyan desk from '57 to—

MAK: '59. Sometime in '59, as I recall.

Q: '59. When you say that there really wasn't much to do, by that time, I mean, Qadhafi had not come on the scene.

MAK: Right.

Q: The Wheelus Air Base agreement had been more or less taken care of.

MAK: More or less.

Q: Or was this just a continuing series of arguments?

MAK: Well, there were two matters of concern that I dealt with primarily. One was the formulation of a new petroleum law, because American companies were going out to Libya searching for oil, which everyone had been assured there wasn't any at all before, but they were obviously proven dead wrong. So the various oil companies, in conjunction with the U.S. Government, were formulating a draft of a petroleum law for the state of Libya.

I can't say that I really had any hand in it, because I didn't. The only thing that I really considered a sort of constructive contribution was in trying to get aid approved from the U.S. Government to the country of Libya. The base agreement thing had gone awry, and we were still negotiating with the Libyans on how much they were to get for the base

rights and so forth, although there was supposed to be no quid pro quo. It was just our “generosity” and their “self-interest” that were involved.

Someone in the government had dreamed up a new sort of document you had to prepare, getting the agreement of Defense, AID, White House, Bureau of the Budget, all sorts of people, to stipulate and prove that the granting of money to Libya by the U.S. Government was in the U.S. Government's vital interest. Well, that was my job, to prepare such a document and get it approved by the various departments and agencies. I can't even think of what they called it—

I think it was called a “216 determination.” As none had ever been drawn up, or something like that. I, in effect, had to invent one, and I did. I invented one on paper and got everyone to sign it—Defense, State, AID, everyone but the head of the Bureau of the Budget. He dug in his heels and said, “No, no, no.”

I then had to take it up to Robert Murphy, who was then Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and try to persuade him to approve the determination. We failed. Robert Murphy was not convinced. A sum of money was later agreed upon, though that was after I had left the job..

Q: Another question, though, on this. Libya was working on oil affairs and you were the desk officer. How did it work? We're talking about in the late '50s in the Department of State when oil came in. Did the desk officer, or the country desk officer, was this the action officer? Or what about the economics side? Was there sort of a petroleum overlord within the Department who would sort of march in and take control when you're talking oil at that point, or was it pretty much left to the geographic desk?

MAK: My recollection is that we had almost nothing to do with it. It was done entirely by either oil experts or people above or the economic bureau or somewhere else. As I mentioned, I really didn't have much to do, and I was bored.

Q: You were staff assistant for William Rountree from '59 to '61, I think.

MAK: Well, no, I had several different people. Lewis Jones came in as assistant secretary sort of midway during my term.

Q: You were there in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs—

MAK: Until the summer of '61.

Q: What were the main issues that you were seeing that we were dealing with at that point?

MAK: Oh, golly. It was really across the board; lots of issues. There was always the Arab-Israel problem. There was Nasser. The Cyprus problem was an ongoing affair. Archbishop Makarios causing trouble for a lot of people, and the Turks and the Greeks not getting along about it, nor the British. In '58 we had, of course, the Lebanon blowup and the aftermath of that.

In South Asia there were constant problems. India, Kashmir, probably with Pakistan. There was a host of problems which I did not deal with in a substantive way myself. I was sort of a helper to the assistant secretary, which in a lot of cases meant just a hatchet man.

Q: What do you mean by being a "hatchet man"?

MAK: Well, I had to convey instructions to the various chiefs of section to prepare information memos to the secretary, prepare position papers and instructions to the posts abroad as needed. It was my job to see that all this was done speedily and correctly. A staff assistant in those days was an arm of the staff secretariat of the Secretary of State. We had to make sure that everything that was prepared for the Secretary's signature for any of the high ranking officers of the department was done in a proper way. Dulles was a

very, very particular man and a very meticulous person. You had to have things done his way, and his secretariat staff were very demanding, often unattractively so.

They are very, very strict; and they were kept under very tight rein, and so were we.

Q: How about when Herter became the Secretary? Did that continue that way?

MAK: He was much easier, much, much lighter. But his secretariat continued to operate pretty much the way it had under Dulles, although Dulles had some pretty unpleasant people directly under him.

Q: Who were some of these people?

MAK: Having said that, I'd rather not say.

Q: Well, I'll tell you the reason I asked.

MAK: Well, I can. Rod O'Connor. He's no longer living. Rod was not a very nice person to deal with.

Q: Because I'm trying to get people an idea of how a bureaucracy works, and when you have somebody who is not a nice person to deal with, what are you talking about from your observation?

MAK: He was overprotective of the Secretary. He was not interested at all in substance; he was interested only in form and style, which was sometimes maddening. He was very crude in his dealings with anyone at the bureau level, including the assistant secretary.

Q: What was his background?

MAK: He was a lawyer, worked, I think, in Dulles' law firm in New York. That's my recollection.

Q: Well, now, another thing. In the Department at that time dealing in the Near Eastern affairs, this is about the period when the Israeli or Jewish lobby—whatever you want to call it—was really finding and getting its power. Were you aware of this, and were you having manifestations of this basically domestic political force? Did you become aware of how it operated?

MAK: Oh, yes. That was one of the things you just accepted as being a fact of life. The Jews in this country had a tremendous lobby, a very, very efficient lobby, and a very reasonable lobby in what they were saying. They were very good at expressing their point of view. They would come in regularly to discuss matters with the assistant secretary of state, and certainly with the Secretary, as well. I was only privy to their talks with the assistant secretary and with the deputy assistant secretaries.

They had constant contact with the State Department at all levels. They were invariably polite, but they were very, very forceful. They were not threatening, but they made it absolutely clear what their interests were and how they thought decisions should be made and what decisions should be made.

Q: How about dealing with Congress at the time? Did Congress reflect the Israeli lobby pretty much?

MAK: Yes. Well, as everyone knows, in those days at least, the Arabs had very little constituency in the United States. The Jews had a large constituency. Not just the Jews, but the vast majority of the American people was sympathetic to Israel's situation in the Middle East. Most Americans didn't think much about the problem. They perhaps would read the headlines and their emotions were always—or generally, at least—on the side of the Jews.

The issues were not terribly important to them, and it was sort of a case of the Americans looking at the map where they had to have seen a vast Arab land with a couple hundred

million people and this tiny, little Israel beleaguered by the Arabs, and their interest didn't go much beyond that. So there really wasn't much of a constituency for the Arabs.

Q: Was anybody talking for the Arabs with the Department?

MAK: Well, yes. I wouldn't say that the Arab diplomatic corps was very effective. They later learned to become so, but they didn't have many financial resources, and they had no constituency at all in Congress and very little in the country. So while they regularly visited the Department of State, they didn't have regular access to the top levels as the Jews did.

They rarely met with the Secretary, for instance. They had regular access to the assistant secretaries, but that was generally on minor bilateral problems. And if they wanted to meet with anyone in the Department of State at a higher level on matters concerning Israel, they generally came in as a group, and that was not often.

Q: Speaking of lobbies, at this period of time there really wasn't anything that would approach being called a Greek lobby. Could you say that?

MAK: Oh, no. There certainly was. The Greeks had a very, very good organization, AHEPA.

Q: That's the American Hellenic Educational Protective Association, or something like that.

MAK: Something like that. I honestly never knew what it stood for. But AHEPA was very active. They were very strong. AHEPA was one of the strongest lobbyist groups that I knew of. The Turks had none.

Q: Well, there aren't that many Turks in the United States, and yet the Greek population—I mean, those that are derived from Greek ancestry—is actually rather large in the United States, also well placed as far as having done well in business and in the professions.

MAK: Yes. In addition to that, there was a general feeling of kinship with the Christian Greeks, who had, after all, been occupied by the Nazis and knocked around by the Italians and the Nazis during World War II, and there is a sort of residual sympathy for them. Also, we always looked to Greece as one of the founts of our culture, so there was, as I say, a basic sympathy toward the Greeks. The Turks were pretty much left out of that equation.

Q: From the vantage point of where you were, how did the people in Near Eastern affairs view Nasser and his manifestations at the time?

MAK: There was a great deal of ambivalence. You're speaking of the Near East-South Asia—

Q: Bureau. I'm talking about from the assistant secretary, but also the people you were around there.

MAK: Yes. The desk levels. That was very interesting. There was really quite a dichotomy. There was a very vociferous group, primarily of Arabists, who thought Nasser was the greatest thing on earth. He was really going to do something for the Arabs' pride and for the Arabs' nation and for Egypt, which was just bursting out of the sort of colonial scheme of things. This group felt that he, having thrown out King Farouk, who everyone agreed was corrupt, was going to do something pretty good for Egypt, things that had to be done, and would be in the U.S. best interest in the long run.

Now, that view was shared by a lot of people, but it was also directly opposite to what a lot of other people, well-meaning people, thought. They looked upon Nasser as a direct challenge to Western interests in the area, and they felt that what was happening was that Egypt was turning into a military dictatorship, which we tend automatically to oppose.

So there you have it. It was really quite a division. I would say that at the upper levels, at the assistant secretary level, there was a far more balanced view. It was, “Well, let's wait and see what he does.” Several of our strong allies, or rather “working partners,” such as

Iraq and Saudi Arabia were violently opposed to Nasser. Iraq looked at Nasser and Egypt as a direct challenge to the things that Iraq was trying to do for itself.

Q: You're talking about Iraq before or after—was it July 14, 19—was it '58?

MAK: Well, it sort of straddled that period.

Q: Because it was on both sides of it?

MAK: Yes, it straddled that period. We weren't happy, of course, what happened during and after the Iraqi revolution in which King Faisal and others were killed.

Q: We're talking about when Qasim took over a military coup which killed the king in—what was it—July 14, 1958.

MAK: Yes.

Q: But did we see this as more of a danger, what was happening in Iraq, than we did in what was happening in Egypt? How did we view that Arab area?

MAK: Well, my recollection is—we're talking about quite a while ago—my recollection is that we considered Nasser and Egypt far more important than Iraq. After all, Iraq's influence in the Arab world was very small. Egypt's, on the other hand, was tremendous.I don't recall that Iraq's oil was a major factor at that time.

Q: You know, at the same period you're talking about, I remember seeing in the Persian Gulf, where I was stationed, pictures of Nasser everywhere, even his picture on Thermos jugs and all this. I mean, in the marketplace, everywhere.

MAK: Oh, yes. Absolutely true. It's hard to overstate the influence of Nasser and of Egypt at that period in the entire area, including Iraq. So that's something the Iraqi leadership had

to fight. Nasser's popularity among the populace was immense. Some Arab governments, however, seemed a bit uneasy with his popularity.

Q: Were you sitting in, or were we figuring out how we were going to counter Nasserism? Or are we just going to sort of see how it develops and keep what amounts to a watching brief on it?

MAK: I think at that time we were going to make every effort that we could to get along with Nasser.. That was my recollection. We wanted to help them. We wanted to try to steer him along paths that were in our interests. We particularly were conscious of Soviet enticements to Egypt.

Q: Well, this was after the Aswan Dam thing, wasn't it?

MAK: No.

Q: Dulles was dead. In '59 he was out if it, I guess, at least toward the end of your time.

MAK: Yes, he was. I'm trying to sort these people out. Well, after the Aswan Dam, as you know, the Russians came in with the arms proposals, and we were being much shunted aside. In a way, as I recall, we were not unhappy to be shunted aside at the time. I guess that's about all I can say. I'm going to begin to wander.

Q: Why don't we then move onto your next assignment? You were going to Kuwait. You were there from 1961 to '63, and it was sort of a—I might add that I've attached to this transcript a transcript that was done by you for the historian—or whatever you want to say —of our embassy in Kuwait, didn't you?

MAK: Yes.

Q: Anyway, you did the tape for the historical record and it covers quite a bit about what you did in Kuwait, so I'm not going to go into that very much. But there are a couple of

questions that I would like to ask. First, how did you get this assignment to Kuwait, and what was the situation at the time? We're talking about 1961.

MAK: Well, I remember it fairly well. My friend, Hermann Eilts, was head of the Arabian Peninsula Affairs desk, and Hermann was an old friend of mine and I think he had a certain respect for me. He asked me if I'd be interested in going there, and I told him that I really wasn't very much. The Gulf didn't appeal to me, having had one tour in Dhahran.

But he was convincing. He said, “You know, the British are going to relinquish control over Kuwait in mid-1961, shortly after you arrive there, so we'll be establishing an embassy. You'll be Charg# d'affaires. And you know Arabic and you know a certain amount about the area, having been involved in it for many years, and we think that perhaps that you might like it and we'd like to have you go.”

I was flattered, so I thought, “Sure, why not go and be Charg# d'affaires.” He said they were not planning on sending an ambassador there, so I would be in charge of the embassy. So we went. That's in answer to your question.

Q: Well, now, several questions. One, how did you deal with the Kuwaiti government, and how did you evaluate the Kuwaiti government?

MAK: First of all, practically every minister in the government was a member of the Sabah family.

Q: Would you spell that?

MAK: S-A-B-A-H. Sabah. The Emir Abdullah was a very friendly man who was really quite approachable, but he almost never was interested in discussing anything substantive. Our calls on the Emir were of almost entirely ceremonial. You would go in and chat about this and that, but rarely about anything important. He would often invite us and our wives to dinners at the palace, and he would give his time to all of us. Then he would invite the

ladies separately to have a chat with them.. His wife did not appear at these dinners. Then we would all go home very early, about 6:00, 7:00 in the evening,

Some of the Ministers were impressive. The foreign minister at the time was Sheik Sabah al Ahmad, while deputy Emir the “Crown Prince” was Sheik Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, brother of the emir. He was very approachable, and I would go and visit him fairly often, at least once a month. He had an office in the Foreign Office at that time and he also had an office elsewhere. I would visit him, and we would discuss general problems, either at the Foreign Office or at his home. We had very few immediate problems to discuss, though there would be general area problems which we would discuss.

Iraq and Egypt were the two major sources of worry. Shortly after the Kuwaiti independence in June of 1961, shortly after I had arrived, Iraqi Prime Minister Qasim announced that Kuwait was an integral of Iraq, causing great consternation in Kuwait. He threatened to invade and did move some troops towards the border. The British promptly reacted, in accordance with their agreement, and moved a fleet of troop carriers and fighter aircraft into Kuwait waters. Nothing more happened, and after two months, the British left. This “non-invasion” raised the issue of who would protect Kuwait from any future threats from Iraq or elsewhere. The British really couldn't afford such a commitment, and Kuwait was fearful of inviting armed forces of an Arab nation into the country. Eventually, a mixed Arab force was brought in, and life went on pretty much as before.

A major issue, which we discussed from time to time, was how Kuwait should spend its immense and growing oil revenue. The Kuwaitis had, in fact, sought the help and advice of a board of distinguished foreign bankers and economists, as to the most productive way to allocate and invest these funds. Our own Eugene Black was a member of this group.

The major industry in Kuwait was, of course the petroleum industry. Kuwait was a major producer or petroleum, and the principal company involved was the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). The company was owned jointly by British Petroleum Company and Gulf Oil

Company. Headquarters of KOC was some twenty miles south of Kuwait City and was reached by a well maintained asphalt highway. In the Kuwait part of the so-called Neutral Zone, between the Kuwait-Saudi border, another American Company was operating its concession. Off shore a Japanese company operated its concession. All three were within the Embassy's district, which necessitated frequent visits to these installations to obtain information regarding production and to provide consular services. Relations with these companies were invariably close and friendly.

Q: What about your contacts with the Kuwaiti government? Did you have easy access to the government officials?

I would visit the Foreign Office about every week to discuss anything and everything. I found the officers very approachable and happy to talk.. The foreign minister, Sheik Sabah al Ahmad al Sabah, was an intelligent and very nice man, and all of his staff were people I could pop in on as I did in London. The staff was augmented by several capable members of Palestinian origin, who were working primarily as assistants to the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Emir. They too, were also very approachable and receptive to my just walking in. So it was a very friendly arrangement.

Q: How about competence?

MAK: You mean the Kuwaitis? They were intelligent, and they were educated. You know, it's really very hard to judge their competence. They all had efficient foreigners to do most of the work. I would say, however, that they performed their duties very well. .

Q: Well, you know, again I'm speaking of some distance removed; I visited Kuwait once. But just watching the news and all that, it seems that here is a small desert nation, really desert nation. I mean, what is it? You put up a water tower and that's the tallest building around, at least in those days. No hills or anything else, infertile area. All of a sudden a lot of money comes in, and yet the ruling people didn't seem to become dissipated with this. There may have been dissipation, but I mean it just didn't seem to turn the place into

an earthly paradise or something for a bunch of oil sheiks. Did you have that feeling that these were people who both were intelligent, but also had civic duty, or something like that?

MAK: In general, I would say that's true. They're very religious in the first place. They observe the Koran. Now, that doesn't mean that some of them didn't drink or didn't do things they shouldn't according to the Koran; but basically they were religious people.

Second, there's another thing. Kuwait had a vast amount of money at its disposal, and there were few Kuwaitis. As a matter of fact, I don't think that when I was there were more than 50 or 60,000 Kuwaitis, actually. The number was always arguable. Of these there were the “Kuwaiti Kuwaitis.” Then there were “Saudi Kuwaitis” and there were “Lebanese Kuwaitis” and “Palestinian Kuwaitis” and “Iraqi Kuwaitis;” but these were all second-class citizens. But of “Kuwaiti Kuwaitis,” those born in Kuwait of Kuwaiti parents, there are really not very many, and they all had family property in Kuwait. The government made certain that these Kuwaitis owned property.

I was told that the Kuwait government would give government land to a Kuwaiti family, which could live on the land or sell all or part of it at an inflated price. Thus all “genuine” Kuwaitis were assured a share in the wealth of the country. Any foreigner who wanted to establish a business in Kuwait had to have a Kuwaiti partner, and this was worth lots of money to any Kuwaiti who would lend his name to a business. So most could became wealthy, by one means or another.

That's one way the Kuwaitis handled this vast wealth. The other way was to have a comprehensive health scheme under which any Kuwaiti, or any non-Kuwait for that matter, could have free health care. This even applied to our Embassy personnel too.. Education was also free for all Kuwaitis. I don't remember whether the same applied to non-Kuwaitis. Non-Kuwaiti residents, the Indians, and those from other Arab countries, lived quite well,

having well paying jobs, good housing, free medical care and other benefits provided by the government.

So that's how they spent a lot of their wealth. They also spent it on nice homes in Beirut, or in Cairo. They established the Fund for the needy Arab states such as Jordan, Sudan; Somalia, Egypt and the various countries in North Africa.

Q: The Kuwaiti government has seemed to have held together and there seems to be a certain amount of steel in it. I'm thinking for the last, almost ten years there's been some terrorists who did some bombing and killing there, and there has been intense pressure from Lebanon on the part of other terrorist organizations to get them out, and yet the Kuwaitis have held firm on keeping these people. This, of course, after the time you were there, but there does seem to be a cohesiveness, rather than just, "Well, let's not cause trouble." I mean, they seem to be able to take a stand and hold to it.

MAK: I think the Kuwaitis have shown far more courage than I would have given them credit for. It's hard for me to know just why they have taken the risks that they have taken. I'll offer some guesses. Their leaders are Sabah, members of the Sabah family, who have been used to governing that country for generations, long before its oil wealth. Those of them in positions of authority appear to have a genuine sense of responsibility toward their country.

Their present Deputy Emir—I think they call him Deputy Emir; is an extremely capable and bright, well-meaning and tough individual. He's a black. He's the only black member of the family as far as I know. He was Minister of Defense when I was there. As far as he's pro-anything other than Kuwaiti, he's pro-Western and pro-American.

I remember when I was there, the government had agreed to let the Russians establish an embassy. This was shortly before I left. I went to him and I said, "Excellency, I don't understand why you're letting these people come in. You know they'll be all over the place

trying to rid of people like you and get rid of people like us. How are you going to keep track of them?"

He looked at me and smiled and says, "Mr. Mak, we expect you to do that." [Laughter] Anyway, he's a charming individual.

Q: The Emir, by the way, is the head of government.

MAK: Yes. The Emir is the head of government. The present Emir was minister of finance when I was there. He knows the financial situation of Kuwait and the rest of the world backward and forward. He watches every penny. He knows exactly what he's doing. He's been trained in it, and he's very, very smart. He's not going to be taken in by anyone. He's dealt with David Rockefeller and his ilk for years now. He can't be buffaloed, and apparently somewhere along the line, the Sabah family has come to the conclusion that if they give into blackmail or threats, that's the end of the Sabahs and the end of Kuwait. That's the only answer I can come up with.

Q: Dayton, going back now to the time you were there, the early '60s. I'm talking about the embassy or the mission or whatever we called it. What did we call it?

MAK: Embassy.

Q: How did we view the Palestinians there? Because I know going back a little earlier when I was in Saudi Arabia, there was always a concern because Saudi Arabia had so many Palestinians doing things, including flying their fighter planes and running their army. In fact, they even had a separate army called the White Army, which was just to make sure that the regular Saudi Army, which was almost run by the Palestinians, didn't get out of hand. So there was concern that the Palestinians had another master other than where they were serving, at least I'm talking about our reflections in Saudi Arabia. How did you view the Palestinians who staffed so many of the professional positions there? As a threat?

MAK: As you know, there were thousands of Palestinians living in Kuwait, and many of them had very responsible positions. They were advisors to the Emir, advisors to the Foreign Office, advisors to this and that ministry, and they were very capable. Some of them were given Kuwaiti citizenship. These people were educated. Almost all of them spoke English fluently. They were friendly to Americans, at least to the embassy, as far as I could judge. We associated socially with many of them.

There was a vast number, along with the Egyptians, of course, as lower-level people, and a vast number in their educational system. The Kuwaitis' educational system was pretty much run at all levels by Palestinians and Egyptians. The Palestinians were always looked upon by the Kuwaitis as second- and third-class residents. Those who were citizens were second-class citizens. Those who were merely residents and workers were looked down upon.

The Kuwaitis let them know their place always. All levels of Kuwaitis, from Bedouin on up, let the Palestinians and all other non-Kuwaiti residents know that they were guests. Whereas, the foreigners were given free medical treatment, they were not given free housing, and they were kept on a pretty short leash. Now, that's sort of like a pride of lions being led around by one man. I guess they knew that many of them had nowhere else to go, and they handled it very well.

Q: They also made sure the Palestinians weren't discontented. In other words, they were getting enough out of this so that they did not represent a discontented under-class.

MAK: Yes. That's exactly it. They were well paid by Arab-world standards. They were not well paid at the Kuwaiti level, but they were well paid and could send money home. If they still had people living in what is now Israel or in Jordan, they could send money home. That was a very, very important source of income to their families. Many of them were there without their families, but most of them, the majority, had families living with them..

Q: So you didn't see them as a fifth column of threat, particularly at that point?

MAK: No. No, I didn't. I think that the Kuwaitis considered the Egyptians a more serious a threat than they did—that was under Nasser—than they did the Palestinians.

Q: Were they making special efforts, and were you keeping a special eye, on the Egyptians or being concerned about the Egyptians and what they might be trying to do?

MAK: Well, yes. We did have to do that, because they were the element that was considered to be the most disruptive in Kuwait while we were there. It was the Kuwaitis who were keeping the eye on them. If there was ever something in the area that displeased Nasser, something that we had done or the British, the signal would go out to his people in Kuwait and they would come roaring down the path to the American Embassy or the British Embassy. The Kuwaiti police would then move in and stop them.

The Kuwaitis did not trust Nasser or his intentions. And after the “border invasion” of Kuwait by the Iraqis, as I mentioned earlier, the Kuwaitis preferred to set up a mixed Arab force to help protect Kuwait. The Kuwaitis did not want to rely on a one, single Arab country. They were even suspicious of the Saudis as well as the Egyptians. They were not sure that the Saudis did not want to come in and gobble them up with their oil, which is strange because they're practically brothers. There was definitely the suspicion that Saudi intentions were not entirely honorable. And they knew well knew that Egypt's were not honorable. They particularly did not want the Egyptians to send forces to help protect Kuwait.

Q: Didn't want to invite the wolf into the sheep pen.

MAK: Yes. That's a good simile. That's true. So that whole thing sort of blew over, and I left and I lost track of what happened.

Q: Well, one last question on this and I'll refer anybody to your enclosed other transcript. But how about dealing with the British? Having pulled out, were they the paramount group there? Did you have the feeling you were taking over, and were they being sort of dog-in-the-mangerish about the now increased importance of the United States in the Gulf, as far as you saw it?

MAK: The British had a very good, very strong embassy in Kuwait when I was there and a very good, likable, friendly ambassador. They really tried hard not to be dog-in-the-mangerish, but it's very difficult to give up a place like Kuwait where they had sort of been the Raj. They had their chosen people in the government, and they had a great deal of goodwill in Kuwait and the entire area. But they really did like to make it clear that they were top dog there.

I don't want to say that they were obnoxious about it, because we got along very well with them, socially and in every way. Too, I think they knew that they had a problem of getting out of their obligations, which they could no longer afford.. You know, relinquishing influence gracefully. They knew that there was no choice but for us to take over. We had already started increasing our influence in the Gulf. And that was a bitter pill; but they knew that it was one they had to swallow. It was hard for them to take, and they did it gracefully.

Q: Well, as you were running our embassy there, did you work with the American officers to sort of explain and make sure that we weren't too rambunctious or something and to be aware of the British feelings on this thing?

MAK: You speak about the American officers, we only had a handful.

Q: Okay. Well, I mean the three of you.

MAK: There were six of us.

Q: Was this a subject of some conversation and concern?

MAK: No. It was not a matter of concern. We were all socially friendly with the British Embassy. They had a much larger embassy, of course, than we did, and they had various people seconded to various agencies or other ministries. But, no, there was not the slightest problem on that score.

I would like to mention several other aspects of life in Kuwait. One is the physical environment in Kuwait. As you know, the temperature in most seasons is very, very hot, occasionally reaching 115 degrees and continuing for days. The other seasons are mild, with one or two deluges of rain in the winter.

We arrived in Kuwait just as the new Embassy Residence was completed; so we were its first occupants. It was well designed and comfortably furnished. Of course, it was set flat on the desert, about twenty five yards from the Persian Gulf. A few plants and trees had been planted, but the outlook was mostly sand. We said that the beach of Kuwait extended west all the way to the Mediterranean Sea The newly built chancery, a long narrow wooden single story structure, was located another hundred feet inland from the Residence. A two story staff house containing about eight apartments was adjacent to the chancery. Beyond that was a fine tennis court, courtesy of the Kuwait Oil Company. Tennis and volleyball were favorite activities.

A number of us families had school age children, which presented a problem. We sent our daughter to a British school for her first year, which was the final grade provided British children before their being sent to back to England for continuing their education. We solved the problem by establishing a small school in a room of the Chancery, hiring a local Palestinian woman to use the Calvert Correspondence School material as text. We found this satisfactory under the circumstances. Older children were sent to the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon, which was considered excellent. All in all, we thought we fared quite well

Q. What about social life in Kuwait?

MAK: Surprisingly, we actually had quite an active social life. Aside from the small diplomatic corps with its customary official entertaining, the local and foreign business community did considerable entertaining, primarily in the form of dinner parties. We at the embassy often entertained through lunches followed by swimming on the embassy beach. Every Friday night we would invite the embassy staff for popcorn and movie, the movie provided us by one of the local representative of an American company. Also, Kuwait had a movie theater, which showed mostly current American movies.

I personally had the good fortune of being invited by several of the Sabah Shaikhs (the ruling family) to go horse back riding with them at the Kuwait Police Training Academy on the outskirts of the city. Shaikh Salem as Sabah, son of the Deputy Ruler, instructed me in jumping and was very kind to me. Shaikh Humud, a distant cousin of Shaikh Salem also rode with me at the Academy. We also tried our hand at camel riding, which I found unpleasant.

I have an amusing story to tell concerning my friend Shaikh Humud. Humud would sometimes pick me up at the Residence and return me there after our ride. Occasionally, we would stop at his home or at the Residence for tea or soft drink. At one of these occasions, we were sitting in my living room, along with my wife and daughter, when Humud, addressing my wife, said, “Mrs. Mak, I think you and Mr. Mak should stay in Kuwait”. We didn't immediately respond. Humud then added: “I will find Mr. Mak a Kuwaiti wife”. Well, we had a little difficulty in coming up with a diplomatic response to that. Shaikh Humud had several wives, though never met any of them.

Once I was invited by one of the Shaikhs to a horse and camel race ,which took place in the desert beyond the city. About fifteen members of the Kuwait Royal Family, all male, of course, were gathered for this affair, which began about noon and continued until late afternoon. First, an elaborate meal of lamb, vegetables and sweets was served. After

this, we all lay down on cots and slept for an hour or so; then began the camel and horse racing. This was all very informal and was carried out with lots of laughing and joking. It was a really great experience and a most unusual one.

NOTE: See the ADDENDUM on Kuwait which follows at the end of this Oral History.

Q: Well, Dayton, I'd like to move on then. You left there in '63, and you went to the Naval War College where you spent a year, and we won't go into that, because we'll move to your last overseas assignment. That was as deputy chief of mission in Beirut from 1964 to '69. How did that assignment come about?

MAK: Golly. I guess it came about having—well, being available and having two slots open in Beirut. I guess they just figured that here's a body and there's a vacancy. Both the economic slot and the political slot were going to be open. Dick Parker was going to be transferred somewhere—I've forgotten where—and the economic slot was also going to be open. So I guess that's how.

Q: But you went as Deputy Chief of Mission?

MAK: No. I went out as Political Officer. I became Deputy Chief of Mission after the Six Day War. When I arrived, Ambassador Meyer—

Q: This is Armin Meyer.

MAK: Ambassador Armin Meyer said, “Look, you can have your choice. You can be head of the political section or you can be head of the economic section.” I felt, well, I've being doing economic work mainly in Kuwait—or it was a mixture in Kuwait. I thought, well, why not flip a coin. And it came up Political.

Q: Economic, you mean?

MAK: Political. No, I decided to take the political section. So that's what I was, chief of the Embassy's political section.

Q: I might mention I assume at this point—we're talking about 1964—that Beirut was considered a marvelous assignment.

MAK: Oh, it was. Yes. It was never quite what they would call the Paris of the Middle East. It might have been Paris of the Middle East, but it wasn't much like Paris. But it was delightful, yes. It was a wonderful place.

Q: We're speaking now of 1989, and it's considered sort of hell on earth as far as a war-torn place. We have a minuscule representation.

MAK: It was a delightful place then.

Q: The ambassador was Armin Meyer for part of the time you were there.

MAK: Yes, he was there. Well, anyone who wants to read about what really went on in Lebanon my first couple of years should read his Oral History.

Q: In fact, you just interviewed him as part of our collection.

You became deputy chief. When did that happen?

MAK: After the '67 War.

Q: Armin Meyer has been an ambassador in a number of places, including Japan. What was his operating style?

MAK: Armin had been initially a newspaper correspondent, as I remember.

That was, I think, briefly. He was mainly in the USIS, and then his impressive capabilities were recognized, and he was brought in the Department as DCM in Afghanistan where he

really ran the embassy, and then later on he served in the Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary. He was a man of obvious great capabilities. He worked primarily in the Middle East—probably entirely in the Middle East up until then—and that's why he was chosen as Ambassador.

Q: How did he use the embassy? How did he use you?

MAK: I got waylaid, didn't I? He had served in Beirut before as political officer and charg# d'affaires. He knew everybody; he really did. He knew Lebanon like very few Americans know it. He really was keen on this. So, as a result, he pretty much ran his own embassy. He knew what should be reported. He knew what was going on. He knew whom to see. He knew what should be done. Each morning he would immediately begin typing out reports of events to be reported, which, of course, left me with not much to do. So when something would happen that I knew about, and I presumed that Armin knew about too, I would rush into the embassy before he got to his typewriter and had it all typed out and on his desk before he could get to his typewriter. I tried desperately to get reports on his desk before he got to them. He didn't read French, which I did, so I could read the newspaper and get a little bit up on him from that point of view. But Armin could have run that embassy without any help. [Laughter] A stenographer was all he needed. His antenna was formidable, so accurate. He knew everyone and everything going on.

Q: What were our concerns there at that time?

MAK: Well, I guess our main concern at the time was the presidential elections that were coming up in Lebanon. Now, this really was an odd thing to be so concerned about, but it was. The various forces of Lebanon were trying to battle out who was going to be president. It tended to be a contest between the pro-Nasserites and anti-Nasserites, almost the pro-West and the anti-West. It was like that. But it really wasn't of all that much concern to us, but the parties concerned made it so.

Q: One found oneself sucked into these politics, which, of course, at that time had not turned septic as they have now.

MAK: Well, it was a peculiar situation, and actually it was pretty unimportant from the standpoint of our viewpoint in the world. Our interests really were never in jeopardy whichever side won, so it was really a matter of just watching. It was impossible to convince the local politicians that the Embassy and the US was not backing a candidate.

Q: Was there ever a feeling, looking at this thing objectively, that really Lebanon should have been a part of Syria? I mean, it made more sense than this really post-World War I creation, or not?

MAK: That's really a tough one. The Lebanese didn't want to part of Syria. Now, it's certain that some Moslem Lebanese would not be unhappy to be a part of Syria, but Syria had gone through revolution after revolution, government after government, and to attach Lebanon to it didn't make much sense. Anyway, what politician would want to see his position and prestige reduced by becoming Syrian? The Lebanese are, above all, merchants. That's not just the Christians or the top Moslems; they're all basically merchants and have been so for centuries. To be Levantine is to be a merchant. They know how to get along, and they really don't much want anyone telling them what to do.

Q: When one talks about the Levant, that's the Levant.

MAK: Yes, that's basically it. They're the Levantines.

There was another thing that interested us—two things, really—I think of major interest to us. One was the Arab-Israel matter. The Israelis were trying to get more water out of the rivers that flowed through Lebanon and Jordan than the riparian states thought they were entitled to. Lebanon, and of course Jordan, would prefer that they didn't get a drop of their water that originated in the Arab land.

Various schemes were devised by the Israelis to divert water for their own use, and the Arabs, the Lebanese, concocted their schemes to keep them from doing it, such as building diversionary canals.. We tried to keep on top of that.

This also was the beginning of the Palestinian forces movement into South Lebanon to use the south as a launching point of attacks against Israel. This was a matter of constant concern to the Lebanese, who occasionally sought our help in placating the Israelis and convincing them that Lebanon did not wish to become involved in any armed conflict. This was the subject of several of my visits to the Foreign Office when I was Charg#.

Q: What were you doing? I mean, you at the embassy and you personally.

There was still a considerable settling of Palestinians in southern Lebanon at that time?

MAK: Fatah was organized and became important during that time, and PFLOP. All those splinter groups of Fatah, and Arafat himself, became known, and they started setting up camp in the south. I thought I invented the word “Fatahland,” but I gather other people have invented it, too, so we all invented it.

Q: What was the embassy doing and what were you doing as far as the problem of the Palestinians moving in and setting up these things?

MAK: The problems, as I remember, were often about border problems with the Israelis. Generally it concerned suspicions that the Palestinians were up to something on the border. The Lebanese were frightened that the Israelis would invade Lebanon if the Palestinians launched attacks across the border. After a series of such Palestinian “forays,” I can remember the Foreign Ministers asking me as Charg# if we knew of Israeli intentions to attack them. I think they wanted us to pass on to the Israelis word that they did not want any trouble. If anything happened, they were not a party to it.

Q: Because there was no Lebanese representation in Israel, of course.

MAK: That's right.

Q: Well, did you pass this word on to our embassy?

MAK: I passed it to Washington.

Q: How were relations between our embassy in Lebanon and our embassy Tel Aviv? Were there mutual consultations?

MAK: No, we didn't have any. Every once in a while they would send an officer over to discuss matters, but we had no direct liaison.

Q: What happened during the '67 War? This was the very successful war of the Israelis in which they basically took over the whole Sinai and the Golan Heights and all of the West Bank, too, wasn't it?

MAK: Yes.

Q: And Jerusalem.

MAK: Well, there was a great deal of tension before the war erupted. Nasser was making all sorts of threats against Israel. Jordan was sort of in between, and terribly nervous about Israeli intentions. Suddenly the thing exploded, with the Israelis making a preemptive attack on Egypt, which was totally successful. However, as I remember, the King of Jordan was convinced by Nasser that American planes were involved and protested to the American Embassy and to the world that Americans had joined in the battle against the Arab world.

At the same time, King Hussein decided that Nasser was winning the war, so Jordanian troops attacked Israel. Foolishly, of course, but they attacked Israel. The Lebanese press

then absolutely blew this all out of proportion, and the United States was suddenly one of the villains largely because of the mistake over the planes.

Q: Then how did this impact on you?

MAK: Well, as a result, we started evacuating people from Egypt and from Israel and, I think, from Jordan; and our dependents and non-essential U.S. Government personnel were evacuated from Lebanon to Greece and Italy.

Q: These are basically dependents and—

MAK: Dependents and nonessential personnel, yes, and our ambassador was asked to leave. I believe they took this action solely to appease their Moslem constituents and the other Arab countries. I felt that the Lebanese were ambivalent about the whole affair.. The Moslems were almost entirely anti-American. Mobs came storming to the embassy, throwing Molotov cocktails and stones at the chancery building. The crowds swooped down the Corniche to the embassy.

Q: The Corniche being the main road along the coast.

MAK: Along the coast, leading to the embassy and past where we lived and past the American University of Beirut, beating up our cars parked along there, and then finally being stopped by tanks of the Lebanese Army.

There was a blackout in Lebanon, and our dependents were evacuated at night through the AUB campus and bussed to the airport. From then on, we who remained were accompanied by guards as we went to and from the embassy. It was all sort of strange, and we felt in a pretty much in war-like mood. We didn't know which way things were going. Then Nasser was whipped very speedily, in six days, and he resigned as president of Egypt.

Q: It was a six-day war.

MAK: Yes. Nasser resigned, and that brought out the crowds again surging through the streets, smashing western and “Christian” signs and windows and gunning for the American embassy. It was a very tense period. Everything was shut down in Beirut. And then Nasser decided to withdraw his resignation, and that brought on more demonstrations. So it was really sort of hectic.

I remember during that time our dependents were all gone, and the city was dead, just dead. No planes were coming in, no boats going by, no traffic, just tanks around the embassy, and we felt a bit sorry for ourselves. I had a call then from a friend of mine in the Lebanese Foreign Office, Jean Riachi. Jean said, “Dayton, how about your coming to the beach today?”

I said, “What?”

He said, “Sure. Come on, I'll pick you up.” So he picked me up at noon in his expensive Italian vehicle. I can't even remember the name of it, it was so expensive. We went down to the beach, and there were the Lebanese having a marvelous time. The beach was crowded with bikini clad girls and young men playing beach ball or sunning in the sand, all having a marvelous time. War? What war?

I thought, “Boy, this really shows you how your mind can get the better f you.” From then on I thought, “The hell with it. I'll go where I want to go in Beirut.” In a few weeks the dependents came home, and everything went along just as though nothing had happened; except, of course, from then on the Palestinian problem got worse.

Q: And we were reporting on it, seeing it, but there wasn't—

MAK: That's when we were reporting daily on what the Palestinians were doing and saying what the Lebanese were thinking about, what the Foreign Office was doing about it, and what they could possibly do to maintain their own position in this country.

Q: There's been, of course, a prohibition for many years, which has just been lifted with them this year to a limited extent, of dealing with the People's Palestinian Liberation Organization or anything to do with them. You're an Arabic speaker, you're a political officer, you have a lot of Palestinians and a lot of things that were happening and there was just beginning really to turn into a major element within Lebanon. Did you have any contact at all with people who would be considered Palestinian leaders?

MAK: I don't remember having contact with any of them, no. Our contacts would be largely with Lebanese who were their spokesmen, who were their allies. And there were many of them, both in the press and politics. But, no. They didn't seek us out, and we didn't seek them out.

Q: Was there a prohibition?

MAK: No.

Q: Was the feeling that this was a no-no, or there just wasn't any point in trying to talk to them?

MAK: Well, at that point they really hadn't become a force in Lebanon politics. They were an extraneous element and they weren't terribly important at the time. Obviously, history shows that they were growing in importance, but there were no prohibitions against them. They just weren't an element at the time.

Q: Well, did you go down into southern Lebanon and travel around and see what was happening down there?

MAK: Oh, yes, we would. We'd go down there fairly often. It was always a little dicey, because even when I was there in '68, '69, the Shiites were not happy with us at all. I remember going to one reception given by a local sheik down there, and it was obvious that we were Americans. The American ambassador, Dwight Porter, was there. Someone had strewn nails and tacks so our police escort jeeps got flat tires, and there would sometimes be people lining the roads throwing little stones at our convoy as we passed.

It wasn't a major problem, but it was a growing problem. It was not terribly pleasant going down there. But we continued to call on the major sheiks there. A couple of times I called on—and one time with the ambassador, another time alone—on Sheik Musa Sadr, head of the Shiite religious element, I believe in Tyre, the fellow who went to Libya and was never heard of since. He was the leading Shiite in the country at the time. I remember accompanying the Ambassador on a visit to Musa Sadr in his home—really a weird, weird character—and calling on the Druze leader down there, Sheik Majid Arslan, and all the local dignitaries.

Q: Well, when you call on them, what did this mean? When you call on the Shiite leader, was there any meaningful conversation?

MAK: Well, not very meaningful, no. They would know in advance—this would all be arranged in advance—that we would be coming, and we would either have lunch or tea, and the conversation would always, if there was anything substantive, be about one of two things—who's going to be president, if there was going to be a presidential election, or the Palestinian problem in its many aspects. Invariably, there would be an unpleasant harangue over US support of Israel

These people were always interested in the water diversion schemes because they were right in their back yard. They were always interested in what the Israelis are doing and when the United States was going to stop supporting Israel and help the Palestinians get back their country.

Q: We were talking about the atmosphere in Lebanon concerning spies. I wonder if you could talk a little about the atmosphere in Lebanon concerning spies from your experience.

MAK: Well, the gathering of intelligence, both by the people we didn't want gathering intelligence and our own, was really one of our prime considerations. Beirut was loaded with such people, official and unofficial It seemed that every Lebanese had some story to tell, and it mostly concerned internal politics. One met an awful lot of Lebanese that way, and, while it was time consuming, it was enjoyable and occasionally useful.

Q: Free lance and this? [Chuckles]

MAK: Yes. Practically everyone you would meet—correspondents or business people or parliamentarians, anyone—was in the market as buyer or seller of intelligence of any kind. It didn't really matter which side they were on or you were on, nearly everything could be sold for a price. You had to really live with that in mind. Everything you said, everything you did, you realized would get back to somebody, probably for a price.

Generally it didn't matter because the things that we were doing in Beirut were not of major importance to the rest of the world. They were probably important to a certain segment of us and our immediate neighbors, but to not much else The Russians were active in trying to bug our embassy, and succeeding, at least once to my knowledge, and they tried to subvert personnel in the embassy, by buying their services. It was a little bit like that cartoon in Mad magazine, “Spy vs. Spy”..

Q: It shows people blowing each other up, and in each one there are traps and counter traps and counter-counter traps, and that sort of thing.

MAK: Right. There were so many funny things. Someone would throw a stick of dynamite at the embassy. No one ever really knew why or who did it. We assumed that it was done by pro-Palestinian elements. The Soviets tried to embarrass us by making up a forged letter, a letter ostensibly from the U.S. ambassador Meyer to the Secretary of

State advocating our support such-and-such candidate in the oncoming elections, thus proving that the Embassy was interfering in the Lebanese presidential elections. The letter contained clumsy errors in wording and grammar, presumably to let us know that they knew that we knew that they had forged the letter. Of course many Lebanese fell for the scheme. However, it did little damage and was mainly just part of the scene.

Q: Well, I have to ask, did they ever use any of the bikini-clad young ladies down on the beach for this sort of thing?

MAK: Well, I'm sure they did.

Q: I spent 30 years in the diplomatic service and kept waiting, with no luck. [Chuckles]

MAK: No. We had a number of people try to do it, but they were not bikini-clad. One was red-headed Olga. She had been a Soviet spy, but she fell in love with a Canadian and defected, jumping ship when it landed in Beirut. She came to us.. We had to keep her under wraps for a time and finally, with the help of the local PanAm representative, smuggled her out on a Pan-Am flight. But no bikini-clads. As I mentioned, we had many people eager to give us information.

Q: How about the press corps? Again, when I was in Saudi Arabia, I had the impression, and I got this from my colleagues, that you had almost all Middle East problems, which was boiling at the time, were reported on by a bunch of reporters that did nothing but sit at the bar at the St. Georges Hotel and listen to stories and swap stories and then report as though they were on the scene somewhere. How did you find the press corps—the American, but also the international press corps—on its reporting, and how did you deal with them?

MAK: We had a number of them, and they were all excellent. The one I remember best was Joe Alec Morris, who was absolutely topnotch. I think he was with The Christian Science Monitor. The New York Times fellow, I think he's now with the Washington Post,

(Jim Hoagland, I think it was). And Dana Adams Schmidt was there, and Dana was good. They didn't just sit at the St. Georges bar, as alleged, though that particular bar was a meeting place for giving and collecting information of all sorts. Beirut was a spy town, and information was a salable commodity.

Beirut was a good place to gather intelligence about the countries in the area, because in most of the countries, they weren't allowed to, and the local Beirut press was very open. It wasn't necessarily accurate, but it was open. Beirut had a lot of newspapers reporting everything that went on in the area, as well as lot of things that didn't. But for an intelligent fellow like Joe Alec Morris or Dana Adams Schmidt or these others could sift through it and get pretty much accurate stuff. They would sometimes check it with us and sometimes not. Beirut was also an important stop for any members of the press visiting or passing though. They usually would touch base with the Embassy. We tried to be very open with them. Of course, we could learn as much from them as they could from us.

Q: Well, speaking of national interest, one of the remarks that is prevalent is that American interests abroad are mainly economic. In Lebanon, did we have any major economic interests that were driving us, can you think of?

MAK: I would think our major interest in Lebanon from an economic standpoint would be the fact a pipeline ended up in—

Q: It was called tap line.

MAK: Yes, Tap Line. Keeping it open was important, but that primarily was not a matter of Lebanese concern. It was a matter of what happened in Syria and Jordan and in Israel. As for Lebanon, we had interests there. It was an entrep#t for the area—I mean, for the rest of the Levant and for Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, even Syria to a certain extent. It was an excellent place for American companies (particularly banks) who had operations throughout the Middle East to have their headquarters and operate freely. Educated local personnel were readily available. The climate was good, communications excellent,

and the government and society receptive to their operations. Perhaps best of all, the government was relatively stable and welcoming.

However, our trade with Lebanon was peanuts compared to other countries. They wanted us to buy their apples, which we didn't really need. And we were not a major supplier to Lebanon. Though the Lebanese wanted us to sell them military planes and equipment, we, the US, did not wish to become a major supplier of weapons to Lebanon. I would say that Beirut was primarily a listening post and a good place to meet representatives of other Middle East countries on friendly and agreeable soil.

Q: Is there anything more you'd like to add?

MAK: Embassy Beirut was a delightful post, which we enjoyed very much. The climate was mild, and there was much to do and see. The beaches were great, and skiing in the mountains was pretty good. The Lebanese are basically delightful people, very hospitable and intelligent. All segments of the very diverse population took advantage of their country's physical beauty and seemed to live very lively and contented lives. Beirut's restaurants and nightclubs were always crowded, and every family appeared to be living an active social life.

Q: Well, you left Beirut in 1969, and then you went to the National War College from '69 to '70. And then you were in Intelligence and Research from '70 to '71, and then you left the Foreign Service. As an Arabist and all, it looked like you were sort of on the track for doing things. Why did you leave at that time?

MAK: There are two basic reasons, maybe three. The main reason was that my mother was very sick. My father had developed Parkinson's. As I mentioned earlier, he had a small brokerage firm in Iowa and had come to the point where he felt he couldn't run it alone. He would have to cash it in, pay a large capital gains tax on his shares when

liquidating it. So he asked me if I would come home and take over the firm. I thought about it carefully, and decided to do so.

At the same time, I had worked very hard in INR and had been terribly busy.

Q: You were in what?

MAK: INR. I was the Chief of Near East-South Asia Section in States' Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Q: Oh, boy.

MAK: And it was a very busy time. It was day and night and weekends and just going on really pretty much. You know, I just really didn't want to go on doing this very long, so I thought, “Well, now, what are the possibilities?” I felt I was in line to be an Ambassador, and I said to myself, “Where? Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Bahrain, Baghdad?” I said, “I don't want to go to any of those places” I have lived a lot of my life in that area, and I found it very worthwhile. I loved it. But that's not where I wanted to spend the rest of my career.

Furthermore, I felt that the Department of State was going through a peculiar period in which people who were deciding things in my areas were not terribly sympathetic to Arabists. And I thought, “Why go through years of frustration when I have an opportunity to have a career which felt a sense of obligation to do anyway?” And, also, I thought I might find it worthwhile and interesting. So I did.

Q: Just to continue the story, how did you find it as a—

MAK: Well, I didn't like it very much. I discovered that my friends, my close friends, were still there and they were very kind to me, but we had very little in common anymore. So much happened to all of us since our college days, that we had grown apart. Furthermore,

I found living in my hometown so very different from Washington and the places I had been living those many years that I no longer felt comfortable and satisfied.

My mother died shortly after my arrival. My father was sick. There were so many problems. We moved into a beautiful house. It was wonderful, but it was too big, and I didn't feel completely comfortable there. Because of the illness of my parents, I didn't feel like making a lot of new friends. My mother died and my father died, and we left.

Q: Well, looking back on your Foreign Service career, as you know, you've done these interviews yourself, there are two questions asked. What gave you the greatest satisfaction?

MAK: I think there's no doubt, our time in London. Our time in London was fascinating. I worked with some of the brightest people I've ever known, the kindest people I've ever known. I had the most responsible jobs in my entire career in the Foreign Service were in London. There were the most fascinating problems.

Q: You were feeling you were accomplishing.

MAK: I felt I was accomplishing something. I know that I was respected. I felt that I did my best work there. It was exhilarating in every way, and I worked very hard.

Q: Well, again, the final question. A young person comes to you and says, “Mr. Mak, what about the Foreign Service as a career today?” How would you or do you respond to such a question?

MAK: I would say the Foreign Service has changed immensely since I was in it. I think it is still probably the most fascinating career that one can ever get into. It is for anyone who really wants an exciting career, that's it. He should be aware of two things. First, on is never going to get rich.. Second, one is never going to be fully appreciated. But I still believe it is a most inwardly rewarding career.

There is always some danger. Physical dangers to you and your family, but that adds zest to the whole thing. It's exciting. You're confronted with so many different issues and problems. You're never stuck on one problem for long. In the Foreign Service the variety of problems and questions is just limitless. You have constant, chance to improve yourself. You can learn a new language learn a new culture. I think that knowing the language and culture of the country, even a little bit of it, is going to improve your appreciation of your job and of the country immeasurably. You're going to enjoy it much more. You're going to enjoy greeting people with the little bit that you know and adding to it. There's so many dimensions to the Foreign Service that are so rewarding. I don't know, other than academia, I don't where you could possibly live as full a life intellectually and physically as you can in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, Dayton, I thank you very much for this. This has been fun.

MAK: Thank you.

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ADDENDUM

[Transcription of a recording done at the request of the U.S. embassy in Kuwait regarding the history of that establishment]

I'm Dayton Mak, here in Washington D.C. I served as Charg# d'Affaires of our Embassy in Kuwait from mid-1961 until mid-1963. When I was asked by Hermann Eilts in the Department if I would be interested in going to Kuwait as Charg# d'Affaires, I was, of course, interested, but having served in Saudi Arabia and Libya previously I knew a bit about what I was getting into and I wasn't too sure that I wanted to run through all that again. However, because the Consulate, which it was then, was going to be elevated to

the rank of Embassy shortly after my arrival in Kuwait I thought it might be very interesting and certainly a step up. So I did agree that I would go.

I remember that we landed in Kuwait on a very hot day, it always seemed to be hot in Kuwait in the summertime anyway. We landed on the airport which is located now...I would say it is between the second and third ring roads which in today's Kuwait is somewhat near the center of the city. It was very hot when we landed and as you can imagine, for anyone who has been in that part of the world, it was rather a shock to come down onto what looked like a limitless desert with a few tiny buildings and a little bit of encampment around the area. When we got on the ground it was still terribly, terribly hot, but all those tiny little buildings turned out to be rather substantial structures, and the city didn't look bad at all. We arrived at the Consulate in due time, and I was rather appalled to see the condition of the Consulate. You may have seen from old photos that the original consulate was an Arab-style building of stucco type over some sort of brick or something, with a roof that was apparently either of reed or palm frond or something that let in the water when you had the periodic deluges of Kuwait in the proper season. Anyway, we weren't in the Consulate very long; a new compound had been built adjacent to the Consulate, which as you may know is adjacent to the palace grounds of Sheikh Abdallah Jabir the then Minister of Health, I believe he was, at that time.

The new Embassy compound, into which we moved about two weeks after our arrival, was pretty much a square acreage smack on the Persian Gulf and just about as barren as any spot of desert you could find. There was hardly a blade of grass—in fact there was no grass. There were some palm trees that were perhaps a foot high and some tamarisks that were a little taller that had been rather imaginatively and attractively planted throughout the compound, but other than that there was no greenery whatsoever. There were three structures on the compound property; one was the Embassy residence which was about twenty-five yards from the water. A square building, large enough, it had five bedrooms, , three baths, a nice reception room, a dining room, a small library or study, a kitchen and appurtenances. In addition there was the Embassy Chancery, about twenty-five yards

back from the Residence, which was a long, low, flat building and I think still serves as the basic Chancery building now in Kuwait, although I trust they have added another story and enlarged it quite a bit. To the left of that as you faced the water there was a large apartment house structure which was the staff apartments. This is the building which was partially destroyed in the bombing several years ago in Kuwait which led to the loss of life at that time.

We were really quite comfortable in the new compound; it was attractively furnished, with basic easy-to-maintain furniture and yet attractive, as I say. Our staff was tiny—there were five American officers and three American clerks. I was the Charg# and the others were political officers and consular officers and one economic officer who served as my number two. The local staff was also very small; we had about four very efficient clerks, including two consulate clerks, an economic clerk, and an information or USIA clerk—that was Fauzi Dalloul who I believe is still with the Embassy there. We didn't have very much of a work load at that time; I don't really remember how many visas we issued per month - primarily to local merchants who wanted to travel to the United States for one reason or another.

The American community probably didn't amount to over a couple of hundred; those were primarily from the Kuwait Oil Company and most of them lived at Ahmadi thirty-five miles away down the coast, and from companies such as Bechtel, Schlumberger, Getty Oil Company, Aminoil Company, and a few other construction companies that had to do with developing oil properties in the Gulf and on the land. So it was really not a very large American community and it was not a particularly close-knit community. The various companies were spread all over Kuwait and the Neutral Zone with really only a handful living in Kuwait town. This meant that each group was pretty much on its own, although from time to time groups of them would come into the Embassy and would come and swim on our beach and play volleyball with us and sometimes use the tennis court. Then, of course, on the Fourth of July we would have them all in for a party which they all seemed

to enjoy. But basically each community sort of survived on its own. There wasn't a great deal of mixing in the social life among any of the groups.

We had no American school in Kuwait. When we arrived there we had a daughter who was to go into third grade. The British did have a school there but, as I recall, after third grade the British children all went back home to England to school. So our daughter had one year of schooling at the British school in Kuwait and after that we had to find some alternative. So what we did was to apply to the Calvert school, I believe it is in Baltimore, a correspondence course school. We found a very fine Palestinian woman, the wife of Awani Nahkli whom you may still remember, and she set up a school in part of our Embassy Chancery building. I think there were about five or six students, one or two from the American community there, and I believe one or two Palestinian children. This turned out to be quite a good school and our daughter went there for all the time we were in Kuwait—until two years later when we were transferred back to the States.

I mentioned earlier that when I arrived in Kuwait and for the first few weeks we were a Consulate. Sometime shortly thereafter we became an Embassy when Kuwait itself changed its treaty relationship with Britain and became what we called totally independent. I was immediately appointed Charg# d'Affaires de Jure, I think they called me, because we had no Ambassador appointed. Subsequently Parker Hart, who was Ambassador in Saudi Arabia and to Yemen, was named Ambassador to Kuwait as well; non-resident, but resident in Saudi Arabia. So I then became Charg# d'Affaires ad Interim.

I am completely unclear in my mind as to which came first, Kuwait independence, our Fourth of July party or the trouble with Iraq, so I will go ahead blindly and you can fill in the proper date sequence here. Kuwait became independent and at that time there was a great deal of celebrating to be done. The Kuwaitis had a big parade, they had enormous fireworks at night, a great, great display, there was a lot of visiting going on, many public functions that I was required to attend, many diwans to visit and many formal calls to make. It really was a very exciting time and the only problem was that it was in mid-

summer and it was dreadfully, dreadfully hot. Anyone who knows about Kuwait knows that in the summertime Kuwait can be something like 115 or 120 degrees Fahrenheit and that is really something. It was terribly hot! Anyway it was very exciting and I found it terribly interesting.

The next thing of importance was our Fourth of July Party which to me was quite an event. It provided the first possibility for all the Kuwaiti merchants and Kuwaiti sheikhs, the ruling family and so forth, to come and visit the new Embassy building and to pay their respects to me and the American government. They did, they came in droves, and they were all fascinated to see this new Embassy compound. It was really, despite its austerity, a very handsome building and quite different from anything that you saw in Kuwait at that time. I was proud of it and they all seemed to be impressed by the new building and the new compound. It did give me a chance of course to meet many of these merchants and sheikhs of the royal family and others. As I say, it was really a very worthwhile experience.

Probably the most important thing that happened other than the independence of Kuwait was the threat issued by Prime Minister Qasim of Iraq against Kuwait. Qasim in one of his speeches after Kuwait had proclaimed its independence laid claim to Kuwait saying that Kuwait was an integral part of Iraq. Well this immediately got everyone up in arms. The British, in particular, who had just changed their relationship with Kuwait immediately came to Kuwait's rescue. They took this threat by Qasim very, very seriously and sent in a couple of aircraft carriers—actually as I recall they were helicopter carriers—some troop transports and destroyers and so forth. So we really had quite a flotilla moving into Kuwait harbor on that hot, hot summer's day. It was a very tense time but perhaps the whole thing sounded a little bit more tense outside than it really was inside. Very few people that I talked to in Kuwait, either among the Kuwaitis or among the British really thought that Qasim intended to come in and take over Kuwait. Particularly after the British moved in with their ships and landed their forces, it seemed pretty unrealistic that Qasim would try to move in. Anyway, he didn't and things died down after awhile. The British troops left, there was a lot of folderol about who would replace them to protect Kuwait and finally they came

up with some solution whereby Arab League forces, who were largely Saudi, Jordanian, and/or Egyptian, would come in or be nearby to take over from the British in case Qasim should threaten again. However, all this sort of died away. Kuwait was, as I remember, not very happy about having Saudi Arabia come in and protect its interests; they were not particularly interested in Egypt either, though Egypt was probably a bit safer because Egypt was farther away. But Nasserism was sort of a threat or at least a nervous-making element in Kuwait in those days. Anyway it all seemed to die down and pretty soon the whole thing was practically forgotten.

From then on Kuwait seemed to be turning its attention away from a threat from anyone toward economic matters. I think perhaps an outgrowth of all of this sensitivity in the Arab world to the wealth of Kuwait was the plan which was formulated with the help of some American leaders and others, which resulted in the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. The Kuwaitis, I think, realized that they couldn't be sitting on all this wealth without having to pay some sort of price, so they very cleverly, on their own and with help, devised this fund which was designed to help Arab countries with their economic problems. This was a many, many million dollar fund which was established and as I remember was very helpful to Sudan and even to Egypt and to other Arab countries. I don't know whatever happened to it, perhaps it is still in existence; I don't know.

The Embassy workload was really rather light. Our primary interest was, of course, economic. The Americans, through the Kuwait Oil Company, Gulf Oil, were concerned with petroleum production and the marketing thereof. Likewise there was Getty Oil in the Saudi half of the Kuwait-Saudi Neutral Zone and the American Independent Oil Company down in the Kuwait half of the Neutral Zone. So we had to keep close touch with these oil companies, keep abreast of their problems and keep some eye on their production. In addition there were the Japanese, who had offshore interests and part of our job was to try to keep track of their problems and their production. This wasn't easy because they were pretty close-mouthed about their operations, but I think we eventually got what we wanted.

We did have other economic interests there, primarily commercial. General Motors and Ford both had substantial outlets there in Kuwait, and other manufacturing companies did too. However, it was a rather strange situation; the Kuwaiti merchants were very interested in expanding their businesses and getting more and more American products into the country and they would ask our assistance in getting American companies interested in allowing them to establish dealerships in the country and to provide them with the American products. You would think that the American producers and American manufacturers would be terribly interested in exploiting this marvelous market, but they didn't seem to be interested at all. Even Ford and General Motors had a terrible time getting their quota of vehicles, and spare parts were almost impossible to get. We would wring our hands and apologize and do all sorts of things but somehow we could just not seem to get the American manufacturers interested in servicing the Kuwait public, which was so very, very wealthy even then.

There were a couple of exceptions to that; I believe it was Lear Jet sent a team out there with one of its Lear Executive Jets and took a number of the officials up for exciting rides in the jet, but I don't think they ever sold any. Tiffany, the jewelers in New York, also sent a man out with brochures and a whole packet of slides showing these very, very expensive jewels. We, in due course, got him appointments with various of the wealthy merchants and sheikhs of the royal family there in Kuwait and he would show them all of these slides and they were very, very interested, but it turned out that Kuwaitis were not interested in buying anything from a picture on a slide. They would only buy the real thing which is brought out and inspected by their own people, then they would buy it. Tiffany went home with its slides and I don't think they sold anything directly, but it was an interesting experience anyway.

We were pretty much of a basic Embassy. Our telegrams we would type out on a local form, take it down to the local telegraph office and send it off. Now this, of course, was quite adequate until we had real problems; in other words when the threat of Iraq

happened this was no longer possible. So we had really a terrible time. Very quickly the Department put us “on line”, I think they call it; they improved the communications so that we were in direct communications with Washington. We didn't really have any problem as far as transferring funds or procuring food, and I don't really remember why, but everything seemed to work pretty well. There was a good banking system in Kuwait; no American banks but plenty of British and Kuwait and there seemed to be no problem. Supplies—we didn't seem to need a lot of supplies and they came in adequately by air. There was fairly good air service to Kuwait at the time. Food—we didn't really need to import food, the Kuwaitis had one or two supermarkets as they called them, they are probably no bigger than a drug store in Washington, D.C., or smaller. They sold quite a good array of products. They were quite expensive of course, but we didn't really suffer from the lack of any food. Also the local market, the souk, was pretty adequate; they had marvelous fish, Kuwait being right on the sea, and the Kuwaitis were fish-eaters and they had quite a market going for that. The shrimp were wonderful; very wonderful and very cheap. We could put fish and all sorts of seafood in our deep freeze and keep until we needed it for some reception or dinner or something like that. So we really weren't suffering. True, we didn't have beef but nearly anything else that could be canned or preserved. Most of the food came from Beirut through the Abella supermarket. As I say, we lived quite happily.

In those days any foreigner was allowed to have a ration card for alcohol. Of course many of the Kuwaitis had their servants provide them with their alcohol, so alcohol was not a problem as far as supply was concerned. Of course you didn't see any alcohol at any of the official functions of the Kuwaitis, the functions that were provided by the members of the royal family or top members of the government. However, others in the government, particularly some of the Palestinian or Lebanese officials in the government, would openly serve alcohol at their dinner parties and other parties.

How was our business conducted? Business in Kuwait was conducted on a very personal basis. I myself, as Charg# d'Affaires—incidentally as you may know the rank of Consul is much higher in the eyes of people out there, the Arabs, than that of Charg# d'Affaires,

which really didn't mean a lot to them. The Consul was someone who was pretty important and the doors opened for him, but for the Charg# d'Affaires well it was sort of “what is that?” So as Consul I visited many, many merchants, and what one would do is—during the day I would drop in to various establishments, and with my Arabic which was no more than adequate, we would discuss the time of day, how's business and all of that sort of thing. If I found that there was some interest in establishing a relationship with an American firm or they needed some help, I would then go along with an interpreter and discuss it more thoroughly, or just send an interpreter alone. Our interpreter being the local Arab assistant in the commercial section of the Embassy.

The government officials were always very helpful. I found the Kuwaitis very, very receptive to having you drop in on them, without appointment or with appointment, and discuss just about anything, including items in the newspaper. It didn't have to be any particular business. In fact we had very little official business dealings with the Kuwaitis at that time. It was mainly keeping a close relationship with them, letting them know that we were represented in the country, were at their disposal and that we were interested in their welfare as a nation. I think they appreciated that, I found it very interesting and enjoyable.

Most of the Kuwaiti government officials spoke only Arabic; the higher up you got the less English they spoke. The Emir, Emir Abdullah, for instance spoke no English at all, so when I spoke with him I had to have an interpreter. Generally it would be his interpreter who would be there, either Bader al Mullah or one of his other people, Abdul Assiz Hussein was one, and I have forgotten the names of most of the others. The number two, and his successor, Sheikh Sabah Salim, also spoke no English; well he spoke a tiny bit, but in order to speak with him you would have to get an interpreter. There again he used his man in his office to act as interpreter and keep notes and that sort of thing. The present ruler, Abdullah Jaber, who was then Minister of Finance, does speak English very well and one needed no interpreter for him. Sheikh Sabah Salim's son, Sheikh Salim Sabah, also would sometimes interpret for his father.

These people, the government officials and particularly the Sabahs, were very generous about entertaining in the evening. For instance the Emir, Sheikh Abdullah, would periodically have dinners for the foreign diplomatic corps, which was tiny, and some of the local merchants and others on his staff. These generally were held very early in the evening, I think around 5:00 or 5:30 in the afternoon, or maybe 6:00 o'clock, but it was always terribly hot at that hour. These were feasts of lamb or mutton and with chickens and so forth, but it was generally what we used to call “the old sheep grab.” They were very elaborate affairs with five or six or seven sheep strung out over a long table with all of us sitting around it and we would eat our fill. As we wished, one by one we would get up and go wash our hands. The Emir would come and join us later on and after about a twenty minute discussion through the interpreter with whomever the Emir wished to speak, he would leave and we would all go on home. One of the habits that Emir Abdullah had was to hold a special sort of little diwan or meeting of the wives, the women, who would all gather round him, and he enjoyed that very much.

Our social life in Kuwait was not terribly exciting. We in the American Embassy compound had it over most of the Americans living in Kuwait, and as I say there were not very many. First of all we had this pretty marvelous beach right at our doorstep so a lot of times we would be down at the beach during the day and even in the evening enjoying the cool water. We also had our tennis court which we used, particularly as a volleyball court. The volleyball court seemed to be very popular with us and some of our friends, many of whom were Lebanese and Palestinian. On Friday, on Saturday afternoons when it got cooler, and after spending a certain time on the beach, we would go to the tennis court and put up our volleyball net and have a number of sets of volleyball. Then I would generally invite the American staff to the residence where we would have a light supper, popcorn, and a movie. We were very fortunate to have nearby to have an American woman who provided, on a rental basis, movies to the various oil camps around the area, American oil camps. She had quite an inventory of up-to-date films which she would lend us and we would show these films at least once a week there at the residence for the benefit of the staff and

any guests they might like to bring in. So we had a certain amount of togetherness with the staff at the residence every week. Perhaps it was too much, I don't know, but no one was obliged to come who didn't want to come. Nearly everyone did come.

There wasn't a lot of mixing with the Kuwaitis. Most of the Kuwaiti wives were not educated and not particularly interested in meeting American women or other foreigners at all; and their husbands weren't particularly interested in having their wives meet these people. In addition very few of the Kuwaitis spoke English very well or were interested in entertaining foreigners. One particular exception was the current Emir, Jaber al Ahmad, he was then Minister of Finance and used to give very elaborate dinner parties for any important businessman or government official who came to Kuwait. In particular he seemed to like David Rockefeller, who at that time was trying to get an opening for the Chase Manhattan Bank in Kuwait. I think he was very fond of David. He would entertain him and his wife whenever he came, and any other American dignitary of particularly high rank in Sheikh Jaber's estimation. Sheikh Sabah Salim was very kind and invited my wife and me along with his chief assistant and his wife to come to his home to watch a movie and have some soft drinks and sometimes have dinner. Some of the other Kuwaitis like Sheikh Salim Sabah, Sabah Salim's son, was very kind to me and used to take me riding at the police academy where we would ride horses belonging either to the Sheikh himself or the police academy and we would sometimes even ride camels which was quite a rare treat. I have some photos of me on a camel, which are rather ridiculous.

There were a few other Kuwaitis who were very helpful and very sociable. I would include in those Abdul Ali Reza who was actually of a Saudi family and who built our Embassy compound in Kuwait. There was Jassem Katami who is still in the news. There was Rashid al Rashid who was in the Foreign Office and had been a champion runner at AUB, who along with his wife was very friendly and helpful to us. Another one particularly helpful was Faisal Mazidi, who handled petroleum matters at the time and who helped negotiate the final agreement between the KOC and the Kuwait government, I believe it was in 1962 or 1963. I remember Faisal was a man I called upon to help translate with Sheikh Sabah

Salim when I was asked by the Department to transmit the letter asking Kuwait's support in the Cuban missile crisis. This was beyond my Arabic and I had no one on hand to help me so I turned to Faisal Mazidi whom I rounded out of bed and who very graciously helped. I mentioned that Sheikh Sabah Salim was particularly friendly and as a matter of fact had sent over to me one day a Piaget wrist watch for me and a string of Persian Gulf pearls for my wife, not realizing that we couldn't accept such gifts. I had to go the next day and explain how much I appreciated the gesture and how much I regretted that I was unable to accept the gifts because of government regulations. Sabah Sabah Salim took that very well, and as a matter of fact I wonder if he didn't know already that I couldn't accept them —I don't know.

Another very impressive person and one whom I found delightful in every way was Sheikh Saad Abdullah who is now I believe the Crown Prince, or called the Crown Prince of Kuwait. He was at that time Minister of Defense and he used to discuss with me fairly often the possibility of our providing Kuwait with various planes, weapons and so forth, but nothing ever came of that because the British were pretty well tied in there. I do remember, however, speaking to him one day about the Kuwaiti decision to allow the Russians to establish an Embassy in Kuwait. I told Sheikh Saad, “You know they aren't coming in because they love you, they will be coming in here trying to undermine you and who is going to keep an eye on all these people?” He sort of looked at me and laughed with a twinkle in his eye and said, “Well I expect you Americans to do that.” Anyway there it is. Another very useful person and very capable was someone who I believe is still in the government, Abdul Aziz Hussein. There was also Tallot Ghosson who was helpful in the Foreign Office, and then our old neighbor and friend Abdullah Jabar who's palace was right next door to the embassy. Abdullah Jabar was an interesting man. I would hate to say how old he was then, but he was fairly old at the time; he was called “the marrying Sheikh”; he was a man who didn't believe in concubines but he loved young women and he would find a beautiful woman (often a Westerner) and he would marry her. He was allowed several wives and I never knew for sure how many he had at any one time. He

would stroll along the beach from his palace grounds across in front of ours picking up oyster shells. One time I asked him why he was doing this. He said, “Oh yes, but look at the beautiful pearls I found in them.” Apparently he actually found pearls in these oyster shells. He was a delightful man who was sometimes maligned, but he was very nice.

There were several Kuwaiti families in Kuwait who were very kind to us too. Generally they were the Al-Ghonims. The Al-Ghonims and the Al-Mullahs and the Ali Rezas, and the Marzouks. They were all sort of related, except for the Ali Rezas. It is very interesting that the Marzouks and the Al-Mullahs and the Al-Ghonims, all of whom are related, really made their connection with the Embassy through our two very attractive and very capable American stenographers, Nancy Chippendale and Virginia Cheslick. These two young girls were really “adopted” by these Kuwaiti families. The wives and mothers of the Sheikhs and their children really considered them as their daughters. They would send their chauffeur-driven cars to pick up the girls to take them to their homes and they would be given dinners and lunches, the run of the whole household with their swimming pools and so forth. These girls really introduced the Consulate, and later the Embassy, to many of these Kuwaiti families, all of whom had the utmost respect for these very highly intelligent and respectable young women. I can't say enough about their high qualities and how much they did for us at the Embassy.

There wasn't an awful a lot to do in Kuwait as you can imagine in those days. I don't know that there is anymore now, but a couple of the things were of interest. There was one movie theater which foreigners and women could attend. You had to make reservations in advance and you generally had to sit in a certain section of the theater. The movies were basically American movies and modern ones. In fact I remember seeing “West Side Story” there in 1962 or 1963. Also in Kuwait there were large Lebanese, Palestinian, and Egyptian communities. These people were quite a bit different from the Kuwaitis and had a very much more liberalized idea of social life and so forth. They gave a lot of parties. There was a lot of dancing and we were invited, everyone in the Consulate was invited to these parties. One could really be going all the time in Kuwait, at least on the weekends, if one

had a mind to. These were also the same people whom we would invite to our beach on the weekends to enjoy the cool of the water.

Our good friend Bader Al-Mullah who was the Secretary to the Emir, was a very pro-western young man and was an integral part of our social life at the Embassy. Bader was a very adventurous young man and he decided that he wanted to do something quite different in the way of entertainment, and he invited the Cypress Gardens troop of water skiers and acrobatic skiers to come to Kuwait to perform. Where to perform, that was the big problem. I offered him the use of the Embassy beach. Bader Al-Mullah had stands built in front of the Embassy residence right on the water edge and these young performers from Cypress Gardens performed off the coast of the Embassy compound. They were really a terrific success. Afterward Bader gave quite a reception for them and there was a sort of gala feeling about the whole thing. Unfortunately Bader died of cancer a few years later, and I must say Kuwait probably missed him for a long time.

The Kuwaitis themselves were great travelers. Every summer they would pick up, some of them chartering an entire aircraft, and take their entire families to the mountains of Beirut. This was a favorite spot and I am sure they all miss it very much now that Beirut is out of the question for them. Nearly everyone went somewhere for the summer, at least the Kuwaitis. The Emir, Emir Abdullah, for some strange reason always went to India; he liked Bombay. I think he liked the pretty girls there. The Persians, the Kuwaitis of Persian origin, of course, went to Isfahan, Tehran, and Shiraz during the summer and other times. Those of Iraq ancestry often would go up to Iraq, not that it was very cool up there. The Saudis, I suppose, to Saudi Arabia. But everyone did seem to go somewhere and we found that it was very easy to get into the habit of going off to Beirut ourselves, although it was fairly expensive to do so, or to Tehran, or Isfahan, or Shiraz, or someplace like that. Europe seemed an awful long way away and of course it was expensive to go there so generally people, at least on the Embassy staff, didn't go to Europe.

As for other types of recreation, I particularly enjoyed playing squash at what was then the secondary school and is now part of Kuwait University. There weren't too many squash players there, but there were some and they even had a pro who licked the socks off everyone there, of course. There was a swimming pool at the secondary school as well and a few of us would go there from time to time. One of the main things that I did and a few others of us did was go riding. As I mentioned earlier Sheikh Salim Sabah was a good friend of mine, and I would go with him to the police training school where they had a number of horses as well as camels and was invited to ride there any time I wished. Sheikh Salim had a certain group around him, sort of retainers and political followers who would go with him to ride and would form part of his own diwan. I would ride with them, including his younger brother Sheikh Ali and Sheikh Hamood Sabah who was some sort of cousin.

He was an interesting man, Sheikh Hamood was. He considered himself very much an Arab of the desert; he was not a city man, he said—incidentally he spoke almost no English, but we managed to get along pretty well with a smattering of English and a smattering of Arabic. Sheikh Hamood would go out for several months every year into the desert and live with the Bedouin tribes. His city cousins, primarily city people, made fun of him; they thought he was putting on this business of Arab of the desert, but I am sure he wasn't. He was really a very nice fellow, and very amusing. Sometimes after riding he would come by the Embassy residence and we would sit around and have a coca-cola, or something like that, he obviously didn't drink. One time he was sitting there afterward, my wife was sitting with us, and he said, “ Mrs. Mak, I think Mr. Mak should stay here.” She said, “Oh?” He said, “Yes, I think we should get him a Kuwaiti wife.” Well that didn't go over terribly well. Another time he came and he saw that I had an oud (what we call a lute). He said, “I can play that.” So he picked it up and sure enough he strummed the oud and sang some Arab songs for us. He was a delightful man. Another time I was riding with him around his compound, his sort of palace compound—any big house of a Sheikh is called a palace in Kuwait or was in those days. We were driving around after having a soft drink

in his diwan. We were riding around in his brand new Mercedes; he still had the plastic covers on the seats. He said, “Mr. Mak, how do you like my new car?” I said, “Oh, its very nice, Sheikh Hamood.” He said, “I want you to have it.” Well I gulped, “Sheikh Hamood, sorry I cannot do that, I cannot accept this, its brand new, its yours, its beautiful but I don't want it.” He thought a minute and said, “Mr. Mak, I'll get you one just like it.” Well I had to tell him that I could not accept that either, but I appreciated it very much. He did the same thing again when we were in his palace listening to some phonograph records. He brought out one gold sword after another and tried to give one of them to me and I explained that I just simply couldn't do it. But you see how generous they are and how really simple and kind they were.

I think life in Kuwait must have been pretty difficult for the women, American women in particular. There wasn't much that they had in common with the Kuwaiti wives, so few of them spoke English, so few of them were interested in knowing Americans. They had their own family lives to think about; Americans came and went so there wasn't any particular point in getting acquainted. Consequently there was no real social life, there were plenty of teas and so forth among the various national groups in Kuwait. But for the woman I am sure it was rather difficult; she didn't have a lot to occupy her of real intellectual interest.

There were of course several women in Kuwait who were of importance in that area. One, of course, was Violet Dixon, who as far as I know is still there. I needn't tell you anything about Violet Dixon; she was a very, very dynamic woman, very knowledgeable, brilliant, very kind and very much in love with Kuwait. I remember one time we went to call on her, she offered us the usual tea, or a drink if you wanted it, and then she pulled out a basket of what looked like bits of straw. She said, “I would like to have you try this.” We said, “What is it?” “Well they're locusts.” We gulped and she said, “Try them, try them, they are not bad.” So we each tried one and sure enough you crunched and you got a taste of salt and that's about it; not much taste to it, a little like chewing on salty straw. She laughed and said, “These are boiled in salt water and that is why they are salty and they are a very

good source of protein to the Arabs of the desert. I just think you ought to try one." So I've tried one and I can guarantee that you can eat them that way without being sick.

Another person of interest in Kuwait is Dorothy Scudder. She and her husband, Lew Scudder, were missionary doctors in Kuwait; ran the hospital as well as the mission, Dutch Reformed Mission, and had done so for many years. They were wonderful people, very solid, very down-to-earth, not a bit pretentious, not a bit standoffish or holier than thou art. They were just terribly, terribly nice people who were interested in what they were doing and everyone around them. Dorothy Scudder, I understand, is still in Kuwait though I had thought she was living in Holland, Michigan; but if she is still there I certainly send my very best love and regards to both her and to Violet Dixon.

Life in Kuwait was not really very difficult; the heat, of course, was really pretty bad. I may recollect this falsely, but it seems to me that we had during one summer a full month when the temperature never went below 100 degrees. Now maybe that isn't right, but that is what I told people and it seems to me that that was so. Anyway the fact is that it just never got cool during the summer; never, never. Sometimes it went up to 118# and I think once up to 124#, boiling hot that is. This made life pretty difficult; if you didn't have air conditioning going all the time, you suffered. Kuwait in those days, and it may be true now, was a pretty difficult place for one to live for very long without getting away now and again. Particularly if you lived in the compound, which almost all of us did you were thrown together with all your associates in the Embassy all the time; that is both work and play and your social life. You simply never got away from one another. This, I think, is not a healthy situation and it definitely did cause some problems in our own Embassy while I was there. I found it pretty stultifying from that point of view, although we did have the blessings of having the beach there, the volleyball, the large Lebanese and Palestinian and Egyptian community to fall back on, and the movies and a nice place to live. So I do not think that I suffered at all in Kuwait, but I do think perhaps it is very difficult for many of the staff members to find it congenial there.

It was also sort of difficult to figure out where to go sometime to get away without leaving Kuwait entirely. There wasn't anything to see in the country, wherever you went there was desert. You could go up to Raudhatain, in the north, where the water came from. But that was no great shakes, and it wasn't terribly far and there wasn't really anything to do when you got there. The geography of the country was flat, flat, flat, with one exception in the north and that was the escarpment up near Raudhatain. You had the water, you could go to the island of Faylakah, which was sort of a one time deal as far as you were concerned. It was pretty much isolated and removed from the world in general. But other than the heat and the isolation I don't think we suffered really at all. It was a fairly healthy place—I did come down with typhoid myself, but I was the only one who did and God knows how I got it. Other than that we were pretty healthy. We had our usual bouts with dysentery but even that wasn't terribly bad. We did have the mission hospital nearby; we had some dental care. Anyway that was an interesting life in Kuwait in those days and I suppose it is still interesting. I hope that maybe this will be of some interest to you and your project.

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ADDENDUMAdded May 4, 2006

DHAHRAN AND JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA IN 1948 - 1950

DHAHRAN

The Saudi Arabia of today bears little resemblance to the country I knew in 1948 to1950. Both the cities of Jeddah or Riyadh, as well as the area known as Dhahran, have grown so tremendously over the years that one would have great difficulty in locating the buildings or even the districts he knew so many years ago. My life in Saudi Arabia began with my assignment as Vice Consul to the American Consulate General at Dhahran, which is located near the Persian Gulf in the Eastern province of al Hassa. Within Dhahran were

located the compound of The Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), the Dhahran civil airport and the United States Air Force Dhahran Air Base

I arrived at Dhahran airport the day before Thanksgiving, 1948. I had flown from New York to Cairo and then on to Dhahran, stopping briefly at Aswan and Basra before the final leg of the journey. Shortly after leaving Basra and its vast orchards of date palms, the world suddenly changed from lush green to a world of unrelenting sand, stretching, on the right, into the distance; on the left was a seemingly endless landscape of pale greenish tan, the murky waters of the Persian Gulf. The sight of this vast area of emptiness made my heart sink. The deserts I had known were covered with vegetation and broken by outcroppings of colorful hills and mountains. This desert was a relentless sea of sand stretching as far as the eye could see. Our first indication of human habitation was the appearance of a cluster of buildings perched on an elevation, and in the far distance spots of flame and trails of smoke, the burning gasses in the oil fields. As we approached the coast, another cluster of buildings appeared; this was the Dhahran airport and Air Base.

The acting Consul General, Francis Meloy, and his staff were there on the tarmac to welcome me. I was very grateful for their presence and welcome, and my spirits lifted. After passing through the Saudi document check, we hopped into jeeps and, along with my baggage, made our way over the sandy road to the office of The American Consulate General in Dhahran.

The Consulate building was located on the U.S. Air Base in a World War II Quonset hut, of which many were found on U.S. military installations throughout the world. This was to be not only my working quarters, but also my home. While it was not what one expected a consulate to look like, it was not out of place on an American air base in the deserts of Saudi Arabia. This structure, was appropriately known as the “Quonsulate” My living quarters and those of another officer were in one end of the building, and the consular offices occupied the remainder. Ten steps in the morning and I was at work. Though living and working in a Quonset was not gracious living, it was convenient and acceptable. While

most of the staff lived in quarters in the Aramco compound, except for the consul general, we all took our meals at the Airbase mess hall, which was less than a hundred yards from the consulate.

The staff of the consulate consisted of the Acting Consul General, Francis Meloy and four Vice Consuls; Elmer Hulen, John Randolph, Donald Weymeyer and Dayton Mak. I have forgotten the names of the three clerks.

The climate of Dhahran was a problem. While the nights in winter could be cold, the days could also be uncomfortably hot. Yet neither the cold nor the heat was the major source of discomfort - it was the violent sand storms which would suddenly sweep in from the North, whipping the sand in a frenzied cloud, obliterating the landscape and driving sand and dust through doorways, windows and the slightest cracks in a building's structure. Venturing out into such a storm was thoroughly unpleasant and even dangerous, the flying sand obliterating the landscape, stinging ones skin and forcing its way into ears, nose and clothing.

While living conditions were marginal, working in the so Quonsulate was not unpleasant. The workload was not burdensome, and the members of the staff were competent and congenial. Consul General Meloy was a particularly competent and understanding chief, who took great pains to make life for us as agreeable as possible. After living in the quonsulate for several month, I was given quarters on the Aramco compound, sharing a one bedroom house on what was called “Easter Egg Row”, a row of small houses painted in pastel shades of green yellow, blue and white. This was a distinct improvement from life in the quonsulate.

Aramco personnel were our primary clients. Their needs were relatively simple, primarily of a routine nature such as renewing passports, authenticating documents, etc. Representational duties consisted primarily of occasional visits to the local Amir in Dammam and a few other Saudi Arabian business and political persons, and we had daily

contact with the American Air Force officers, upon whose base the consulate general was located. Reporting to the Department of State on the oil production of Aramco was not a responsibility of the consulate, this being handled by the U.S. embassy in Jeddah with Aramco's Jeddah office, and via Aramco's office in Washington, directly with the U.S. government departments. As the island of Bahrain fell within the Consulate's district, officers from the consulate visited the island on a rotation basis to perform consular services for the American employees of the Bahrain Petroleum company. This was a particularly welcome diversion since Bahrain was a lush, semi-tropical island with a long established business and residential community.

The social life for consulate personnel consisted largely of interaction with Aramco personnel and to a lesser extent with the Air Base personnel. Aramco generously permitted consular personnel to use its handsome club with its swimming pool and tennis courts, and members were welcome at the Officers Club on the base. Visits to typical Arab communities such as the oasis of Qatif and the typical desert towns of Hofuf, Dammam and el Khobar were interesting excursions. Consequently, life in Dhahran, though restricted, was not without compensations. There was, however, little opportunity for contact with local Saudi Arabic speakers, either socially or professionally. After I had been in Dhahran four months, the consulate was visited by a State Department Inspector, who recommended that I be transferred to our Embassy in Jeddah, where I would could make use of my Arabic and increase my proficiency. I was delighted with the prospect, and soon I was off to Jeddah on an Air Force plane.

JEDDAH

We arrived at Jeddah airport around four in the morning, local time. Though we had left Dhahran at a reasonable hour in the morning, we had gone through several time zones. Furthermore, I learned that the Saudis in Jeddah set their clocks on sun time, not Greenwich Mean Time. This difference could be a source of confusion. The Saudis and most of the foreign community reset their watches each day at sundown. A cannon

boom announced the beginning of a new day for the Saudis, who set their watches to midnight. The rest of us set our watches at six o'clock in the evening. The Saudi Arabian Airline, flown by American pilots of TWA, operated on Greenwich Mean Time “plus”, and the US Air Force, based in Dhahran, used its own GMT based time. Bechtel Corporation, the American construction company doing major work in Jeddah, had its own time, also based on GMT. One had always to be conscious of these different times in scheduling appointments.

The Jeddah airport where we landed consisted of an airstrip and a small shed, which served as ticket office and waiting room. The Bechtel company was already building a large new airport to handle the growing number of annual pilgrims, but it was nowhere in sight at that time. I was met by the Administrative officer of the embassy and, after collecting my footlocker, we proceeded along the dusty road into the city of Jeddah. At that time, Jeddah was a small city of perhaps forty thousand. While the old city wall which had defined its limits had recently been torn down, the city had grown very little outside its perimeter. As one approached the city from the airport one was struck by the strange beauty of the place, this vast bulk of tall white buildings huddled together thrusting themselves into the air, gleaming in the intense sunlight. The difference between Jeddah and Dhahran was striking. Here was an old, long established city, so different from the new, artificial community I had just left. Entering the city through what had been a city gate, I felt that I was about to begin a strange and wonderful life in world I could scarcely imagine.

On either side of the road were these four storied, white, balconied structures, leaning over narrow, winding streets, barely wide enough for two donkey drawn carts to pass. Passing through the gate, we drove into a large open square, enclosed on all sides by more of these typical Jeddah residences and arrived at the American Embassy, also a typical Jeddah residence. On one side of the square was the Jeddah hotel, a converted residence, and next to it the “Staff House”, where several of the embassy staff were housed. It then being only about four o'clock in the morning local time, the only persons

in sight was a group of young Arab laborers engaged in maneuvering a large double-door safe up a flight of steps into the embassy offices.

I was taken by the administrative officer to a building adjoining the chancery, it too a typical Jeddah residence. I was pleasantly surprised to find a spacious living-dining room with ceilings at least fifteen feet in height, and walls paneled roughly in teak wood. The apartment consisted of one large room running the full length of the building. It was furnished at one end with a dining table and chairs, the rest contained a sofa and several upholstered chairs, lamps and small tables. A small alcove at one end held an electric refrigerator and storage space. The apartment opened onto a balcony overlooking the street below, offering a view of the buildings opposite and a truncated view of the Red sea in the distance. Off of the dining room was the small bedroom with bath attached. The bedroom held the sole air conditioner of the apartment, the other rooms being cooled by large overhead fans.

As Jeddah had no municipal water supply, water for the bath and the kitchen was pumped up from a water tank located behind the building. The tank was filled daily by a water carrier, who would draw water from his donkey-drawn tank into a gasoline container, which he emptied into the tank. It was then pumped up to the roof. Gravity propelled the water down to the kitchens and bathrooms below when was needed. The source of the water was a distant stream bed or “wadi”, from which water was piped to a central point near the perimeter of the city. There water carriers filled their water tanks and deliver the water throughout the city in their carts, one can at a time. The price per can of water was one riyal, or about thirty cents.

As the kitchens were located on the top floor of the building, the food had to be carried up and down several flights of stairs. Our building, known as Beit Thani, was a typical Jeddah residence. The ground floor was used as a store room, and was largely populated by rats; the second floor contained two apartments similar to mine; the third held my apartment and another; and the fourth, or top floor, contained the kitchens and accommodations for

the servants. Our building was connected to the Chancery building by an open balcony. Both buildings were typical Jeddah residences, four stories high, each with a massive entry door of teak wood, beautifully carved in oriental design, and windows and balconies decorated in teak latticework.

Jeddah had no central electricity, and only merchants and a few of the wealthier citizens had generators to provide light and cooling, the general populace relying on oil lamps for lighting and roof-top sleeping for cooling at night. The embassy, like many commercial and foreign establishments, had its own generators, providing electric light and air-conditioning. These generators were located in the square opposite the embassy in the embassy motor pool. A staff of one American and two Italian workers assured us of electric power for our lights and air conditioners. The embassy had one telephone, which was of limited utility, the primary mode of communication being messengers. To reach the Foreign Office via telephone a Saudi assistant would furiously turn the crank of the telephone box, shouting “Ya markaz, ya markaz” until the central operator responded. No one else in the embassy was tempted to initiate a telephone call. The streets of Jeddah had no formal names and consequently no street addresses. The location of residence and commercial establishment was the name of the owner. To local Jeddawis, the address of the American Embassy was simply “Beit Batterjy”, the house of Mr. Batterjy. Since all mail was sent and received via a central post office, addresses were not needed. Jeddah had no paper currency, business being conducted in gold and silver coins - the gold sovereign and the Saudi silver riyal. Maria Theresa thalers were common, as were gold coins of small denominations. Our semi-monthly pay was given to us in bags of Saudi riyals

While each member of the embassy staff had an air conditioner in his bedroom, only the ambassador's office was so equipped. Large overhead fans did the cooling for the rest. While such working conditions would not be acceptable today, in 1949 the lack of air conditioning was not unusual, and we did not consider ourselves particularly deprived. An exception, however was our newly arrived, middle aged Deputy Chief of Mission, who arrived in Jeddah from a comfortable environment in Europe.. He arrived on a hot, steamy

day and was shown to his apartment on the second floor of Beit Thani, as it was called. The apartment had been thoroughly cleaned in anticipation of his arrival. Sadly, the day before his arrival, Jeddah experienced a severe sand storm, which took care of the careful cleaning and scrubbing that had been done. Instead of a clean, presentable place to live, he entered a dust filled, dirty apartment. To add to his distress, in the middle of the floor lay the remains of a dead fish, left by a resident stray cat as a welcoming gift.

Despite the lack Western type theaters, restaurants, playing fields, parks or other kinds of public entertainment facilities, there was nevertheless an active social life among the members of the foreign diplomatic and commercial communities. The British and Dutch both had embassies, as did several Middle Eastern countries. There was a substantial foreign business community including the American companies Aramco, Bechtel and TWA; the British companies Mitchell-Cotts, Gellatly-Hankey and the Saudi Arabian Mining Syndicate (SAMS); the Dutch had their Bank; and the French maintained a presence via their Banque de l'Indochine. In those days foreigners were permitted to import alcoholic beverages, though it was forbidden to the local Saudis and other Moslems. Consequently, there was considerable partying among the foreign groups. Our ambassador received by diplomatic pouch from the USIS office in Beirut current American films, which were shown on Sunday evenings on the roof of the residence, located a short distance outside the city. Members of the foreign community were welcome at these showings, but local Saudis were prohibited by law from attending.

The import of alcoholic beverages was permitted to embassies and foreign business companies at that time in Saudi Arabia. However, the murder of a British Consul by a young Saudi Prince brought that privilege to an end. The consul had befriended several of the Saudi Princes and socialized with them frequently, alcoholic drinks playing a part in these social activities. One young prince, enraged by the consul's refusal to give him a bottle of whiskey, followed him to his apartment and shot him dead. The King dealt “definitively” with the prince. Until very recently, the import of alcohol was totally forbidden.

The staff of the Embassy consisted of Ambassador J. Rives Childs; political officer and acting Deputy Chief of Mission, Donald Bergus; Deputy Chief of Mission, Heyward Hill; political officers, Hermann Eilts and William Brewer, economic officer Dayton Mak, an administrative officer, two secretaries and three clerks. Though small, it was an efficient and compatible group which worked well in the sometimes difficult environment. All participated in the social activities of the community.

While facilities for recreation were limited, Jeddah had the Red Sea as a source of recreation. Its coral reefs with their underwater vegetation and exotic sea life made trips on the sea a source of pleasure. The fishing was excellent, and the nearby sandy islands were ideal for picnicking, swimming and sunbathing. Some years past, the U.S. Navy had given the embassy a launch, which was a great source of pleasure. The ambassador regularly invited members of the staff to accompany him on fishing excursions, and on occasion, they were permitted to take the launch and its one man crew on visits to the islands. Several other organizations had launches, and members of the embassy were invited on outings to the islands. The British firm, Saudi Arabian Mining Syndicate (SAMS), whose compound was located on the outskirts of the city, had two tennis courts, and embassy personnel were welcome to play on these courts. Occasionally SAMS personnel invited members of our staff to pay overnight visits to their gold mining operations in the interior of the province. The British Locust Mission, encamped in the desert a few miles from the city, also likewise invited us to spend the night at their compound and visit their operations in the desert. Picnicking in the desert was also popular.

Social interaction with the local Saudi population was slight and was limited to members of the commercial community, most of whom represented American or European companies. Entertainment by these merchants consisted of typical Saudi dinners, beginning with a ceremonial tea service, followed by a generous spread of roast sheep, chicken, offerings of mounds of variously flavored rice, a variety of vegetables and a local version of yogurt.

This feast was followed by a variety of sweets, and ended with Arabic coffee, served in small porcelain cups. These were impressive feasts, and an invitation to them was prized.

While other contacts with the local community were rare, one was free to visit the local shopkeepers and try out one's Arabic language ability. The merchants appeared receptive to conversation of small talk about the weather or other minor subjects and were probably amused by my struggle to make myself understood in my basic Syrian Arabic. One was always welcomed with an offer of tea or coffee. These merchants were tolerant, and I appreciated the chance to exercise my limited language ability.

The American and other foreign ladies in Jeddah were treated to a special kind of entertainment as guests of wives of local Saudi officials. The four wives of the very important (and very rich) Minister of finance entertained the ladies on several occasions. According to an American wife who attended several of these events, the party would customarily begin at sundown and continued through the late hours. Saudi ladies, who had arrived wearing the prescribed covering garments, promptly discarded these robes, revealing the latest fashions of Paris and a brilliant collection of fashionable, expensive, jewelry. The ladies would then proceed to dance with one another, presumably dancing to the music of forbidden phonograph records.

King ibn Saud (Abdul Aziz), was the ruler of Saudi Arabia during my stay in the country.Ambassador Childs would occasionally visit the king at his palace in Riyadh, where he preferred to live. On such occasions the ambassador invited a member of the staff to accompany him. The king's court would specify precisely when the ambassador's plane should arrive at the Riyadh airport so as not to disturb the king's rest. Likewise, the plane was not permitted to depart while the king was resting. Upon arriving at the palace, each visitor was given a set of Saudi Arab garments, which were to be worn throughout the visit, which consisted basically of two audiences. The first, a formal or business audience, was held in the kings' “Diwan”, a large room whose floor was covered with fine oriental carpets. Three sides of the room were lined with chairs and couches, the

king receiving his visitors from a large throne-like chair in the center of the row facing the entryway. The visitor was directed to walk forward and bow slightly as one approached the king. The king indicated where the visitor was to sit. On conclusion of the audience, the visitor backed slowly several paces facing the king before turning and leaving.

The second audience took the form of a huge feast on the roof of the palace, the king and the guests all sitting on the lushly carpeted floor. There the typical Saudi feast was presented. The conclusion of the dinner was signaled by the appearance of attendants carrying water for cleansing ones hands and towels to dry them. This was followed by the appearance of another attendant carrying a pot of incense, or “'oud” which was waved over ones Arab garments, leaving them smelling faintly of the Orient. The dinner and audience were finished when the king rose to retire. The following morning as the visitors prepare to depart, each was customarily presented a gift, a fine carpet or perhaps a handsome dagger to the ambassador; a watch bearing the king's likeness, to the others. Ambassador Childs customarily declined his gift.

The king's palace in Riyadh was one of several palaces in the city. These tall, massive structures constructed of mud brick and topped with a crenellated roof, fit precisely ones idea of how a desert fort should look. The “city” of Riyadh in 1949 was little more than a large village, mostly low, mud dwellings, a scattering of palm trees, a small bustling market, or “souk”, and the several palaces belonging to members of the royal family. There were no paved streets and no municipal electricity. As in Jeddah, generators provided whatever electricity existed in the city.

Although the king maintained a palace in Jeddah, it was known that he preferred Riyadh, and he rarely visited Jeddah. When he did make a visit there, normal life of the city came to a standstill. As his impressive motorcade progressed from his palace on the outskirts into and throughout the city, the cheering Jeddawis were rewarded with gold coins hurled into the crowd by the king's attendants. Members of the small diplomatic corps customarily paid their respects to the king at his Jeddah palace during such visits.

American congressional delegations occasionally visited Jeddah and invariably wished to have an audience with the king. Not wishing to offend the delegation but not wishing to come to Jeddah, the king sometimes sent his brother, Prince Faisal (later King Faisal), to represent him. A typical feast followed the official visit at the Jeddah palace. When the visit was concluded, the American guests could expect to receive handsome souvenirs, often carpets, gold encrusted daggers or swords. There was some feeling among the Saudis that receiving these gifts was the primary purpose of the visits.

The attitude of the people of the Western Province towards the Saudi royal family was somewhat ambivalent. Being merchants and traders, who historically had connections with the outer world, they considered themselves worldly and more cultured than the tribesmen in the Eastern provinces. They tended to look down upon these people, whom they considered to be uncouth tribesmen, and they did not share their devotion to the strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam. Furthermore, there remained in the Hejaz a hint of nostalgia for the Hashemite dynasty, which once ruled the province and had been ousted by the Sauds. That the tribesmen of the Eastern province were the primary benefactors of the country's vast oil wealth rankled a bit.

The laws of Saudi Arabia were religious laws and were strictly enforced by religious police. No radio or phonograph music was allowed, either in public or in private. “Entertainment” at a government social function often consisted of the sung recitation of Koranic verses by a highly revered blind cleric, whose talent was greatly admired. Muslim women were strictly prohibited from driving, although foreign, non-Muslim women were permitted do so. While women were required to be completely covered when in public, bedouin women from the desert and non-Muslim foreigners were exceptions to the law. The women from the desert walked freely through the streets unveiled, wearing their brightly colored garments festooned with gold bangles and coins. At the hours of prayer, the religious police were on the streets of the market area of the city (the souk) enforcing the law requiring all Saudis to proceed immediately to daily prayers.

No religious service other than Muslim was permitted in the Kingdom. The only Christian service during my stay in Saudi Arabia was held aboard an American naval vessel on an official naval visit to the port of Jeddah. At Christmas-time private celebrations were held in foreign Christian homes, and the British Ambassador organized a caroling group, which visited foreign Christian residences and establishments on Christmas Eve.

Security was not a problem in Jeddah. The punishment for theft was the loss of a hand. The punishment for murder was beheading. My first visit to a local bank was a case in point. Entering the bank shortly after my arrival in Jeddah I found the floor literally covered with gold sovereigns. These hundreds of coins had been flown to Jeddah in small barrels from Cairo and were emptied onto the floor of the bank to be counted by its employees. Though customers walked in and out of the bank, stepping cautiously through the coins, no apparent precautions were being taken to make sure that none of them “disappeared”. The employees went calmly about their business of collecting and stacking the coins into counting boards.

Saudi punishment for crimes was severe. The punishment for murder was beheading. One day as I was showing a newly arrived staff member to his quarters in a building in the center of the city, we heard shouting coming from the open square below. Rushing out onto the balcony we saw a large crowd of shouting men encircling a blind-folded and bound man, crouched on his knees before a shallow trench. Suddenly a soldier standing behind the man jabbed the man in the back with his sword causing him to straighten and in one stroke swiftly severed his head. The crowd roared its approval and then quietly dispersed. We learned that the slain man had been convicted of murder. Public stoning was the punishment for a woman convicted of adultery.

One of the few consular problems we western embassies had in Jeddah arose from the Saudi law that no non-Muslim was permitted to enter the holy area in which Mecca was located. This area was clearly marked in some areas but not in others. From time to time an employee of an American firm would wander unintentionally into the proscribed area.

While generally he would not be seen my any Saudi authority, occasionally one would be caught and promptly incarcerated in one of the Saudi jails. The process of securing the release of anyone so caught was a long and arduous process. Fortunately, such cases were rare.

The beginning of this proscribed area driving from Jeddah to Mecca was at the oasis of al Hasa, fifteen or twenty miles outside of Jeddah along the road to Mecca. The limit of the forbidden area was marked by a sign in English warning “Non-Moslems Go No Further”. The sign was small, and unfortunately was missed by a group of American men and women taking a drive in the evening to cool off. Although they kept looking for the sign, somehow they missed it, and they proceeded on towards Mecca. Stopped twice by police at two Saudi check points they were waved on after identifying themselves as being from the American Embassy. Some miles further upon reaching the summit of low hill there suddenly appeared before them the unmistakable gate of Mecca, and beyond, the lighted hills of the city. In panic, the driver swiftly turned the car and sped back to Jeddah passing unchallenged through the two police check points

Jeddah was not a healthy place to live; dysentery and stomach ailments were common, and unidentified fevers were common. The city had no central sewage system and no public water system. While the embassy apartments were equipped with modern, western toilets, such facilities were rare in the city. Sand boxes served the purpose for most, and one did not ask what happened to the sewage. The embassy was fortunate in having access to the Bechtel company medical facilities, which were housed in the same building in the center of the city in which several embassy staff members were housed. This clinic treated us for ear the infections, amoebic dysentery and other ailment that appeared from time to time. It also operated as a free clinic to the general Saudi public. Dysentery was so common that it was accepted as a normal condition. According to the clinic doctor, a Saudi woman once brought her child to the clinic, frightened because, for the first time ever, the child had passed a firm stool!

The most serious health problem the embassy encountered was on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, or the “Hajj”. Annually hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims descended on Jeddah, arriving by land, sea and air, to take part in this holy ritual. All pilgrims (or “hajjis”) were required to engage a director, who was responsible for their housing and general welfare, and to conduct them through the holy rituals. There being few hotels of any sort in the city, the vast majority of the pilgrims had no place but the open streets to eat sleep and live until passing on to Mecca. These “directors” were also expected to guarantee the departure of the pilgrims after the hajj. Many pilgrims managed to circumvent the rules and remained in the country long after, some because they wished to die in the holy land and others because they didn't have the money for passage home.

A tragedy occurred during the 1950 pilgrimage involving pilgrims from the Philippines. A Philippine politician had chartered a boat to bring several hundred Muslim pilgrims to Jeddah and provide their return passage. Things went awry shortly after the hajj was completed. The politician did not have sufficient funds to re-charter the ship for the return journey. While attempts to resolve this matter were being made, smallpox broke out among the Philippine pilgrims, prompting the Saudi Arabian health authorities to move the entire Philippine group to the “quarantine island”, several miles off the coast in the Red Sea. The epidemic quickly spread throughout the colony of Philippine pilgrims resulting in many deaths. At that time the American Embassy was charged with representing Philippine interests in Saudi Arabia. It was, consequently, the embassy's responsibility to do what ever necessary to provide for the welfare of the stricken people and seek a solution to the situation. The ambassador arranged to visit the quarantine island and see for himself what was being done to help the suffering people. He asked me to accompany him on this visit to the island. After being revaccinated for smallpox, we took off in our launch and toured the makeshift hospital on the island. The suffering there was unimaginable. Rows and rows of helpless victims were lying quietly awaiting death, their bodied covered with pus-filled sores, their faces formless under the hideous scabs. It seemed that little could be done to cure the stricken, and the disease was left to burn itself

out. According to the British doctor, everyone on the island was immediately vaccinated for smallpox. Those who had not yet been infected did not catch the disease. Of those who had already contracted the disease, most died. Those who survived were left heavily scarred. As I was transferred back to the United States shortly after my visit to the island, I never knew how many of those poor people died or how many found their way safely back to the Philippines.

As elsewhere throughout the world, the month of Ramadan is an important part of the Muslim faith. With a few exemptions, Muslims must abstain from eating, drinking and sexual activity during the hours between dawn and sunset during this month. The lunar month of Ramadan traditionally began at the appearance of the new moon. In Jeddah, the rising and the setting of the sun were signaled by cannon-fire. The cannon at sunset marked the beginning of several hours of feasting, social and business calls and general socializing. While most Saudis were faithful in observing the restrictions, a few did not fast; but these were careful not to be seen. Foreign non-Muslims were welcomed in the homes and offices of friends and acquaintances after the hours of fasting, though they were obliged to be careful not to give offence by any inappropriate activities or conduct. The end of the month of Ramadan was a signal to celebrate with elaborate feasts and entertainment.

The city of Jeddah had little to offer in the way of amenities. There were no local restaurants suitable for westerners. While a limited variety of western canned goods vas available in a few small shops, much of our food was imported from Europe. A local meat market existed, and, though the sanitation was appalling, that is where our servants bought the meat that we ate.. There was little in the way of fresh fruits and vegetables. However, we at the embassy were fortunate in that the United States Air Force made weekly trips to Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, and brought back fruits and vegetables for us and for the air base at Dhahran.

Despite the lack of amenities, morale of the embassy staff was surprisingly good. While the climate was hot and very humid throughout the year, the temperature rarely exceeded 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Sand storms were rare. The tour of duty was relatively short, usually a year and a half. The cost of living was low. The pay, with its hardship post supplement, was attractive, and it was hard to find anything on which to spend money. The housing, though basic was adequate, and all were given the opportunity to spend a week or so in Asmara during one's tour. The presence of a considerable number of westerners throughout the foreign commercial and diplomatic community provided a pleasant social outlet. Jeddah's climate was difficult, however. While the winter was short and relatively mild, the rest of the year was hot and very humid, day and night. There were occasional sand storms, though nothing compared to the frequency and intensity of those experienced in Dhahran. Occasionally in winter Jeddah would receive a torrential rainfall, practically drowning the city and literally “melting” a number of the mud built buildings.

There was always the unanswered question of whether slavery existed in Jeddah. While a particular building in the market area was said to be the site of a slave market, this could not be verified. It was common knowledge, however, that most of the servants of the local Saudis were from Africa, many of whom were unable to afford passage home after the Hajj. It was understood that all servants were to be treated much as members of the family, though they were not free to leave the service of the family at will.

Women held a special status in Saudi Arabia. They were carefully protected and were limited in social contacts, dress and conduct. All females past a certain age were required to wear the veil, and their heads and bodies completely covered when in public. They were not permitted to drive automobiles, and most were given only limited education. A Saudi woman could not leave the country without her husband's consent, nor could she take any of the couple's children out of the country without the husband's permission. This applied equally to foreign women married to Saudi men. A Saudi man could have as many as four wives, and he could quickly divorce one or all of them. Nevertheless, if he did so, he

would have to reckon with the family of the divorced woman and forfeit the “bride price”. Occupying a portion of the square opposite the Embassy was a building known as the home for castoff wives. On particularly hot evenings some of these women could be seen taking the night air on the open roof, covered completely with their black garments.

When I left Jeddah in June, 1950, the city was showing signs of change. Electricity lines were being installed throughout the city, a new airport to handle the burgeoning pilgrim traffic was in progress, the new port was nearing completed, a new, modern air-conditioned hotel was already in operation on the perimeter of the city, and a group of Lebanese physicians were in the process of opening a modern hospital in the city.

End of interview